

ISLAM, ITS THEOLOGY AND THE GREEK PHILOSOPHY

[A SURVEY OF SUFISM, MODERNISM
[SCHOLASTICISM AND DETERMINISM]

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INTRODUCTION

History of the Theology of Islam like that of its Law is an account of the various ways in which Quran was interpreted. The Quran, be it remembered, was revealed piecemeal, during the course of 23 years, according as the need arose to solve the problems of life and death, of this World and the Next. The Quranic thought is simple and intelligible and, according to Shafii, those who knew its language, idioms, structure and style could easily catch its meaning. The moment the Companions of the Prophet heard a verse recited to them they forthwith understood what it conveyed.

'But hardly had the first generation of Muslims passed away when the influences of the Roman and Iranian civilizations began to sweep over the new Arab empire. Translations from the Greek literature gave them new literary tastes and initiated them into the art of dialectics. Zest for novelty and inventiveness in approach to everything came to be ever on the increase, with the result that the simplicity of the Quranic manner gradually lost its charm for them. Slowly, step by step, a stage was reached when everything Quranic was attempted to be given an artificial mould. Since the Quranic thought could not fit into such mould, serious complications in thought arose, with every attempt at resolving them, ending in more intricate complications' (Azad, *The Tarjuman al-Quran* tr. Dr. S. A. Latif, vol. 2, p. xi).

Thus the way of approach to the meaning of the Quran has undergone numerous influences foreign to its

spirit. The Commentators of the Quran, when they found that they could not visualise its real grandeur, tried to give it a meaning which suited their sectarian and philosophic thought.

'The sad result of all this was that the manner of presentation adopted by the Quran was lost in a maze of far-fetched conceits. The strength of the Quranic meaning lies in the manner of its presentation. It is that which lends clarity to its statements and observations, and makes significant the import of its stories and parables, its appeals and admonitions, and its purposes. Once the significance of this manner was missed, the true picture of the Quran was lost to sight.'

'The manner of argument observed by the Prophets was not to assume logical poses and confuse the hearer. They adopted the natural way of direct appeal, such as might reach every type of mind, and touch every heart. But the Commentators obsessed by the philosophy and logic of Greece could hardly bring themselves to look at reality in its naturalness and appreciate it. They thought that they were honouring their Prophets by turning them into dialecticians. They sought to demonstrate the greatness of the Quran by passing it into the framework of Aristotelian logic, hardly realizing that was never its primary object. The result was that the beauty and attraction of the Quranic method of argument and of demonstrating its truth was lost in a network of dialectical disquisitions. In fact, the truth had already been lost. The tragedy was that our commentators could not achieve even what they aimed at. They simply let the door open to doubt and endless speculation. Imam Razi showed the

greatest alacrity and ingenuity in promoting this consummation.'

'The trouble did not end here. The application of philosophy to the Quranic thought gave rise to numerous dialectical terms, with the result that the simple words of Arabic came to be invested with new connotations. The subject of the Quran, it is obvious, is not the philosophy of the Greeks, nor was the Arabic language at the advent of the Quran familiar with its philosophic terms. The words employed in the Quran did not originally bear the meaning which was assigned to them in the light of Greek concepts. The transformation led to a variety of speculations, so much so, that words such as *Khulūd*, *Ahadiyat*, *Mithaliyat*, *Tafsīl*, *Hujjat*, *Burhān* and *Tawīl* came to bear meanings which the earliest listeners of the Quran would never have thought could bear' (Azad, *The Tarjuman al-Quran*, vol. 2, pp. xiv, xv).

There is a marked difference between the interpretation of the Quran by the Companions of the Prophet and that of their successors. While the former present the Quranic meaning in its natural simplicity, the latter give to it a strange visage by making it the subject of subtle disquisitions. In consequence, the commentary according to one's own arbitrary opinion or *Tafsīr-bir-rai* has come into existence whereby the Quranic text is pressed to lend support to the views of the Commentators.

'This style of commentary came into vogue in the days when every doctrinal belief of Islam came to be seriously examined and a number of schools of theology took their rise, each intent on exploiting the Quran to uphold its own point of view.'

'Further, when zealous followers of the different juristic schools among Muslims developed the passion for sectarianism the verses of the Quran were exploited to uphold, by hook or by crook, their own particular schismatic obsession. Few cared to be guided by the plain meaning of the plain word of the Quran, or by the clear purposes underlying the Quranic method of presentation of its contents, or by straightforward reason. Every one attempted to force the Quranic meaning to conform to the views sponsored by the Imam or founder of his own schismatic school of thought.'

'To create further complications, certain sections of the Sufi school of thought in their search for the hidden meaning of the Quran, went so far as to press everything Quranic into the moulds of their own formulae. Thus every Quranic injunction and every basic belief came to bear some sort of esoteric connotation. This form of approach is also *Tafsir-bir-rai* (Azad, *The Tarjuman al-Quran*, vol. 2, p. xiii).

It cannot be denied that the interpretation of the Quran in the light of the Greek philosophy and sectarianism, has suppressed the real meaning of the Quran or that which is natural to it. Take the case of Sufism which, in its inception, was nothing but a disciplined life under the plain words and injunctions of the Quran. There are Sufis, famous for their piousness, who read no esoteric meaning under the plain words of the Quran. They followed the right path, *i.e.*, *sharia* and rendered valuable services to Islam. We have great respect for them and hold them in high esteem. But certain sects among them in search of the hidden meaning of the Quran have adopted

a new form, so much so that a Sufi in this peculiar form came to be known as a Muslim mystic with the pantheistic drift and passive attitude towards life, who under the influence of Platonic philosophy thinks that the world is an illusion and the salvation lies in self abnegation. It is only such sufis as these who are criticized by the Orthodox Ulema whose views we have tried to justify, for this sort of mystic thought is contradictory to the active life preached by Islam wherein the believer is enjoined to play the worthy role of the vicegerent of God, for whom all that is in the heavens and on earth was made to serve (31 : 20) and to whom even the angels had to pay obeisance (38 : 73). Is it, then, lawful to interpret the Quran in a peculiar way and try to flee from the world or practise self denial?

Such, in brief, is the doleful story of the Quranic interpretation. However, there is a passage in the Quran which gives an important clue to its interpretation and to an intelligent approach to its meaning : 'He it is Who hath revealed to Thee (Muhammad) the Book wherein are the clear revelations—They are the substance of the Book—and others (which are) allegorical. But in whose hearts is perversity follow the part thereof that is allegorical, seeking (to cause) dissension by seeking to interpret it whereas none knoweth its hidden meaning except God. And those who are firm in knowledge say : 'We believe in the Book, the whole of it is from our Lord ; but none will grasp the Message except men of understanding' (3 : 73).

The Book or Quran, broadly speaking, may be divided into two portions : (1) the clear revelations or *muhkamat* and (2) the allegorical revelations or *mutshabihat*. The

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Arabic term *mutshabih* as defined by Ahmed Ibn Hanbal is that which requires explanation. It has been translated into English as 'allegorical' but it will be more appropriate to translate it as 'figurative'. Allegory means description of a subject under the guise of some other subject of aptly suggestive resemblance. Allegory is a figure of speech and the Quran abounds in figures of speech, for instance, 'God's hands are wide open' (5 : 67), is a figure of speech, for unbounded liberality. It may be noted here that the hands of God cannot be interpreted in the human sense. Al-Suyuti, in his *Itqan*, holds that the verses relating to the attribute of God must be believed and not interpreted in the human sense.

In the Quran there are the *muqatta'at* or the abbreviated letters prefixed to the Suras (Chapters). A.L.M. for instance, are prefixed to the Sura II. The meaning of such letters is known to God alone, all human efforts at interpreting them are mere conjectures. There are yet other revelations relating to the Unseen (God, His Qualities, His Angels etc.) which we have to believe in as they cannot be grasped nor explained in the human sense. But those in whose hearts is perversity try to interpret them which only serves to cause dissension. Such are the persons condemned by God. Men of wisdom and firm knowledge, therefore, stop here and say, 'We believe in the Book, the whole of it is from our Lord' and do not try to interpret this sort of revelations and cause dissension.

This being the more sensible interpretation of the above verse, majority of the Commentators suggest a full stop after the word 'God'. So the construction of the verse would be as we have given above and not: 'None knoweth

its hidden meaning except God and those who are firm in Knowledge'.

We have touched upon this point, for there has been a conflict of opinion between the Commentators on this subject. Shaikh Mohammed Abduh has discussed it, at great length, as set forth in *Tafsir al-Quran al-Hakim* (vol. 3, pp. 163-172), edited by Muhammad Rashid Rida.

But this does not mean that the power of interpreting is taken away. Those who are firm in Knowledge and also gifted with insight have this power and can interpret such revelations as appear to be vague or ambiguous. Had it not been so, the Prophet would not have prayed to God to give Ibn Abbas firm Knowledge to interpret the Quran and Ibn Abbas would not have claimed that he had that power.

The object of the above verse is to add to the unity of the community through such interpretations as reconcile and resolve the differences. Islam aims at the integration of society and hence would not approve of an interpretation which sows the seeds of discord. Unity is the Keynote of Islam. People in the past attained unity by their acquiescence in and acceptance of the Quranic verses without any dispute about their meaning.

The passages that follow the above verse refer to the miserable condition of al-Madina before the advent of Islam, Yathrib being the name of al-Madina, in those days, it was torn with tribal feuds and dissensions. All these vanished and melted away when the Prophet set his sacred feet on its soil and started teaching the Unity of God to express itself in the Unity of man.

Yathrib was ultimately transformed into the City of

the Prophet, al-Madina, remarkable for its unmatched Brotherhood. The revelations, as such, are the cable of God. They contain guidance and Divine Wisdom and we are asked to hold them fast.

'And Hold Fast', says the Quran, 'all of you together to the cable of God, and be not divided. And remember with gratitude God's favour on you; for ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, ye became brethren ; and ye were on the brink of an abyss of fire ; and He did save you from it. Thus God maketh clear His revelations up to you, that ye may be guided' (3 : 103) ; 'And there may spring from you a nation who invite to goodness, and enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency. Such are they who are successful' (3 : 104) ; 'And be ye not as those who separated and disputed after the clear proofs had come unto them. For such there is an awful doom' (3 : 105).

Interpretation, therefore, must be with a view to bringing the disintegrated parts of Islamic Community unto a composite whole. The task may be undertaken by those who are qualified to do so but it should be in all sincerity and without any intention to create dissensions. Every interpreter has a right to use all the Knowledge and experience he possesses in the service of the Quran. But he must not mix up his own theories, and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. If he does so and uses his personal opinion he must be prepared to occupy his seat in Hell-Fire as said the Prophet. A sound interpretation must always be supported by some authority from the text (Quran and the Sunna). Not only the word and its meaning be taken into consideration but context and the

circumstances in which the text came into existence. No less is the importance attached to good intention, adequate Knowledge, proper understanding and penetrating insight of the interpreter.

According to Ibn Taymiyyah there is no contradiction in the Book (Quran), but the mistake in interpretation is always due to the error in understanding the meaning of the words, their import and the drift. The different sects which have arisen are due mainly to the interpretation to support one's own views. A harmonizing and sincere interpretation of the text is always preferable. In matters relating to Faith the best way to avoid dissension is to believe in what is revealed rather than interpret, and that too, in the light of the Greek Philosophy which is based on pure reason whereas reason cannot fathom the depth of the Unseen such as God, His qualities etc.

Unfortunately, the Greek Philosophy is taken by many Muslim Philosophers for an infallible truth and they have tried to reconcile religion with Philosophy. But their energies are wasted and their efforts in vain, for they strayed in the labyrinth of Philosophy and lost touch with religion. The results they obtained are mere fantasies, a hotch potch of the Platonic Ideas and the Aristotelian Forms, the one leading to Pantheism, the other to Modernism and both highly injurious to Islam as explained in Chapters V and VI.

How did this Philosophy creep into Islam ? The sources through which it came to Arabs are three—Syrian, Egyptian and Persian. The Caliph, Abu Bakr, it may be recalled, died after a reign of only two years and a half, on the 22nd of Jumada II 13 A.H. He was succeeded by

Umar who is noted for his strong moral character and keen sense of justice. It is in his days that Syria fell under the feet of the Muslims after the battle of Yermuk in the year A.D. 634. The Romans were defeated in this battle and were utterly crushed in A.D. 641, when Alexandria, the centre of Hellenic and Egyptian culture and the last town of their refuge in Egypt, was captured by the Muslims. Thus Syria and Egypt became subject to the Muslim domination, and as a result Muslims came into close contact with the inhabitants of these countries who had imbibed the Greek ideas and spirit during the long course of their history.

Likewise, the Sabaeans, who are considered to be Syrian star-worshippers with Hellenistic tendencies and who had entered into Persia before the rise of Islam, carried with them the Greek Philosophy which ultimately came to the Arabs after the battle of Kadessia in A.D. 636. This battle threw open the gates of Persia to the Muslims and hence intermarriages became frequent among the Persians and the Arab settlers. Further, the Persians were introduced into the tribal brotherhood of the Arabs as Mawalis (friends or clients). The Greek Philosophy was, thus, infused into the Muslim mind in less than 10 years after the death of the Prophet in A.D. 632, and had already struck its roots into the Muslim thought by the time Ali was proclaimed Caliph in A.H. 35=A.D. 656. About the middle of the 9th century A.D., it acquired great power and exercised commanding influence over the Muslim land as the Muslim scholars translated the Greek works into Arabic. In this regard the Academy of Bayt al-Hikmah founded by Mamun in the year A.D. 832, deserves especial

mention. It is here that the rendering of the Greek Philosophy into Syriac and Arabic started on a large scale under the Royal patronage. This gave full support to the Mutazilites who were the lovers of reason and who relied exclusively upon it in their interpretation of the Quran.

Whereas Islam came to weld humanity into one brotherhood under the sovereignty of one God and enjoined, for this purpose, not to interpret the Book (Quran) in such a way as to cause dissension, the Greek Philosophy brought about a complete division of the Muslim community into Mutazilism which has assumed the form of Modernism and Sufism which is a living school of Pantheism. Besides, there are other sects which do not appear to be under the direct influence of Greek Philosophy, but their trend towards contemplative life and retirement from this world may be traced back to the mystic thought of neo-Platonism. Disappearance from this world and often the state of intoxication (*Sukr*) of the Imams of the Shiites and their endeavour to seek inner meaning under the plain words of the Quran are the examples of the influence which Greek Philosophy exerted upon them.

The Imamites (those who believe in their Imams) spring from the controversy as to who among the descendants of the Prophet was the rightful Imam (spiritual and temporal leader). The Muslim community, in consequence, splitted into Shiites (followers of Ali and his descendants as their Imams) and Sunnites (those who follow in the footsteps of the Prophet). But a deeper study discloses the fact that it was Abdullah Ibn Saba (a Jew under the garb of Islam) who by his artifices manipulated to intro-

duce sectarianism into Islam. He interpreted the Quranic verses and traditions of the Prophet as it suited his purpose and contrived to form secret societies which led to the assassination of the Caliph Uthman in A.D. 656 and Ali was declared the 4th Caliph. To intensify the sectarian spirit he rose again and not only attributed divinity to Ali but also said that the leadership belonged to Ali by divine right and the three previous Caliphs were usurpers.

Mu'awiya, the then governor of Syria and the favourite of the assassinated Caliph Uthman, refused to submit to Ali's Caliphate, hence war between Ali and Mu'awiya. But a truce was soon declared as the parties to the war accepted the arbitration. The award was in favour of Mu'awiya. Ali rejected it as it was opposed to the terms on which he had agreed to arbitration. There arose a dispute in Ali's Army and a large number of his men deserted him on this ground that Ali who was already appointed a Caliph by the general agreement of the community should not have accepted the arbitration. Those who deserted Ali are called the *Kharijites* or 'seceders', noted for their hostility to Ali while the others who remained faithful to him are named as the Shiites or supporters of Ali.

These two sects are political in their origin but they gradually turned into religious sects. The Shiites glorify Ali and his descendants and hold that the Caliphate belonged to them by divine right, while the Kharijites are democratic in their views and the Caliph, according to them, must be elected by the whole community. They attach more importance to the character of the Caliph. To

the Kharijites faith comprised acknowledgement of God and His Apostle along with the performance of prescribed religious duties. He who failed to perform them ceased to be a believer. The Shiites made faith in the Imam, in addition to faith in God and His Apostle, a part of religion.

The Shiites are divided into various small sects outstanding among them being the Zaydites, the Ismailites and the Ithna-Asharites (Twelvers.) The Twelvers are generally called Imamite because they recognise only twelve Imams, the last of whom disappeared from this world and is sure to appear again in the fullness of time. Since all these Shiite sects believe in their own infallible Imams and their Instructions (*Talim*), they may be called 'Imamites' and 'Talimites' as well. The most extreme Shiites who deify their Imam and have faith in his secret teachings are known as Batinites or Innerites. They do not take the Quranic verses at their face value (*zahir*) but attach importance to their inner meaning (*batin*).

It is interesting to note that the Shiites and the Kharijites both condemn Mu'awiya and his successors. To them, the Umayyads (as rulers) were Godless tyrants who mercilessly murdered many a saint. On this point arose one more sect called the Murjiites. They held that the Umayyads as the rulers of Muslim State confessed the Unity of God, and as such, they were not polytheists. Sins less than polytheism, they said, would not justify anyone to rise in revolt against these rulers or to condemn them. Condemnation, if any, should be postponed till the Day of Judgement. The Murjiites are so-called because a Murjiite is literally 'one who puts off or postpones' and in this case they have actually postponed their judgement.

The Murjiites rejected the idea of eternal punishment holding God to be merciful and kind to His creatures. To them, faith in God, though only an acknowledgement with tongue, is enough to save a sinner and he would not remain in Hell, while the Kharijites held that the sinner who died unrepentant would not be a believer in the real sense. Hence the question arose : What exactly is the faith ?

To the extreme Murjiites, faith (*Iman*) is but a confession of God in the heart. Faith is, thus, a private intercourse with God and one could be a believer who remained a Muslim at heart though outwardly professed some other faith. Same was the view of Jahm Ibn Safwan who was killed in A.H. 128. Jahmites are his followers. He was of a Persian stock and belonged to the extremist wing of the Murjiites.

The Jahmites maintain that God has neither hearing (*sama'*) nor seeing (*basar*), for it is impossible to hear and see without bodily parts which cannot be attributed to God. As opposed to these, Karramites reason out God's qualities in the most literal sense by comparing Him to a human being. The leader of this sect was Abu 'Abd Allah Ibn Karram (d. A.H. 256), according to whom, God had a body with flesh, blood and limbs and could be embraced by those who had purified themselves. He sat on the throne which is a particular place and moved from one direction to another. This is a typical example of the crassest anthropomorphism.

Such are the interpretations of the Unseen and of other Quranic verses which caused dissensions and in consequence the Muslim community splitted into many

sects. Chief among them are the *Jabriyya* (Fatalists) and the *Qadariyya* (opposed to Fatalists). Both these are the first and direct product of the Greek Philosophy and have developed into Sufis and Mutazilites, referred to above. The Sufis are formed into different fraternities and the Mutazilites exist, today, under the name of Modernists. This shows how reason, if given free play, manifests itself in diverse and heterogeneous forms. Reason, as such, cannot be relied upon.

This is why the Orthodox Islam does not allow the free use of reason. Those who are Orthodox never indulge in discussions of anthropomorphic ideas about God and firmly believe in what is given in the Quran without asking how (*bila kayfa*). They have implicit faith in the Quran and the authentic traditions of the Prophet and their views are generally accepted to be right.

Here it may be mentioned that with the passage of time there arose, on the Orthodox side, men who invented Kalam or Scholasticism for the logical treatment of religious dogmas. This was in the form of dialectics to meet the arguments of the Mutazilites. Thus, scholastic theology of Islam came into existence and those who argued in this manner were called Mutakallims. They may be classed as men who have reason for the faith that they adhered to. This is to defend the faith while the Greek Philosophy offends it.

Our object in writing this work is to try to present Islam in its true perspective and give an idea of Greek Philosophy and the evils that have followed in its wake.

Chapter I

ISLAM AND THE QURAN

Meaning of Islam

Islam is the religion of peace. The Arabic word Islam denotes security and particularly the security that lies in submission to the Will of God. It is an all embracing universal religion and takes into consideration every aspect of life. This World and the Next, body and soul, individual and society, God and His relation to man and the Universe find their fullest expression in it. Muhammed of blessed memory, the Prophet of Islam, is the Messenger of peace and a mercy for mankind (21 : 107). He is the last of the Prophets (33 : 40) who taught that the Unity of God must express itself in the unity of man.

If we trace the history of mankind we find that God, in His infinite mercy and love, sent on this earth His chosen apostles in all ages and among all nations to lead them to their noblest destiny, the destiny of peace in this World and bliss in the Hereafter. They all, in their individual efforts, tried to bring humanity within the pale of His eternal unity and harmony. But their spheres of activity were confined to a certain area or a particular nation for whose reform they were commissioned. The time, at last, came when the need for a universal religion and a world order was felt and therewith rose in the full glaze of history and in Mecca, the centre of the World, Prophet Muhammed. He proclaimed to the world that he stood for humanity as a whole.

Why the need was so felt for a messenger of universal character is well explained in the chaos and corruption, that surrounded the world. Tyranny was rampant and selfishness prevailed. The glory of Hellas had declined, Rome's great system of law had departed, Persia played in the hands of the votaries of luxury while India was torn with castes, China a prey to anarchism and Arabia a centre of idolatry.

The seriousness of the Prophet's mission and the responsibility attached to him may be imagined by the opposition he had to meet and the persecution he suffered. At the end of the third year of his Prophethood he received a revelation to warn his kinsfolk against the folly of idolatry in face of the manifest signs of day and night, of life and death, of growth and decay which attest the power of God and His Sovereignty over all things. When he started preaching the unity of God his own clan subjected him to cruel persecution. They ostracized him and even plotted to murder him which resulted in his migration to Yathrib (afterwards called Al-Madina of the Prophet).

Such was the Hijrah, the migration from Mecca to Yathrib, which counts as the beginning of the Muslim era. The thirteen years of storm and stress, persecution and humiliation, thus came to an end. Henceforth dawned a new era of victory and success at Madina where he established his nascent state which, within ten years of his life, grew into an empire of Arabia.

The number of the campaigns which he led himself in the cause of Islam, unity and peace, refinement of character, is twenty-seven. This excludes another thirty-eight expeditions which he planned and sent out under the

Chapter I

ISLAM AND THE QURAN

Meaning of Islam

Islam is the religion of peace. The Arabic word Islam denotes security and particularly the security that lies in submission to the Will of God. It is an all embracing universal religion and takes into consideration every aspect of life. This World and the Next, body and soul, individual and society, God and His relation to man and the Universe find their fullest expression in it. Muhammed of blessed memory, the Prophet of Islam, is the Messenger of peace and a mercy for mankind (21 : 107). He is the last of the Prophets (33 : 40) who taught that the Unity of God must express itself in the unity of man.

If we trace the history of mankind we find that God, in His infinite mercy and love, sent on this earth His chosen apostles in all ages and among all nations to lead them to their noblest destiny, the destiny of peace in this World and bliss in the Hereafter. They all, in their individual efforts, tried to bring humanity within the pale of His eternal unity and harmony. But their spheres of activity were confined to a certain area or a particular nation for whose reform they were commissioned. The time, at last, came when the need for a universal religion and a world order was felt and therewith rose in the full glaze of history and in Mecca, the centre of the World, Prophet Muhammed. He proclaimed to the world that he stood for humanity as a whole.

Why the need was so felt for a messenger of universal character is well explained in the chaos and corruption, that surrounded the world. Tyranny was rampant and selfishness prevailed. The glory of Hellas had declined, Rome's great system of law had departed, Persia played in the hands of the votaries of luxury while India was torn with castes, China a prey to anarchism and Arabia a centre of idolatry.

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The number of the campaigns which he led himself in the cause of Islam, unity and peace, refinement of character, is twenty-seven. This excludes another thirty-eight expeditions which he planned and sent out under the

leaders appointed by him. In these years of his life he eradicated the evils that were rampant in those days, abolished idolatry, raised the status of women, restored to men their individuality, stopped drunkenness and immorality and above all made universal human brotherhood a reality. Never before was there so great an opportunity for mankind to come closer together and form themselves into a single family, 'every one a brother unto every other and responsible for the welfare of the whole'.

Admirable is the sermon which he gave on the Mount of 'Arafat on the occasion of his pilgrimage called the Farewell Pilgrimage :

'Ye People ! Listen to my words, for I know not whether another year will be vouchsafed to me after this year to find myself amongst you'.

'Your lives and property are sacred and inviolable amongst one another until ye appear before the Lord, this day and this month is sacred for all, and remember ye shall have to appear before your Lord, Who shall demand from you an account of all your actions'.

'Ye people ! ye have rights over your wives, and your wives have rights over you—Treat your women with kindness—Verily ye have taken them on the security of God, and made them lawful unto you by the words of God'.

'And your slaves ! See that ye feed them with such food as ye eat yourselves, and clothe them with the stuff ye wear ; and if they commit a fault which ye are not inclined to forgive, then part from them, for they are the servants of the Lord, and are not to be harshly treated'.

'Ye people ! Listen to my words, and understand the same. Know that all Muslims are brothers unto one another. Ye are one brotherhood. Nothing which belongs to another is lawful unto his brother, unless freely given out of good-will. Guard yourselves from committing injustice.'

'Let him that is present tell it unto him that is absent. Haply he that shall be told may remember better than he who hath heard it.'

During the ten years the Prophet presided over the Commonwealth of Islam, a great change had come over the character of the Arabs. They could rightly be called : 'Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in God' (3 : 110). Islam is, therefore, a perfect and pure religion, chosen by God for mankind.

'This day', says God, 'have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you and have I chosen for you Islam as your religion' (5 : 4). The memorable declaration, contained in this verse came to the Prophet in 10 A.H. during the Prophet's last pilgrimage to Mecca. Hence Islam is the perfect and the only religion approved by God :

'The Religion before God is Islam' (3 : 19) and further, 'If any one desires a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him ; and he will be among the losers in the Hereafter' (3 : 85).

It is the religion preached by all the earlier Prophets but perfected with the Prophethood of Muhammed (the last of the Prophets). It is the truth taught by all the inspired Books. In essence it is the fear of God and a consciousness of His Will and Plan to which we have to submit and herein lies the success (23 : 1).

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Miracle of the Quran

The Quran is the Book which contains the teachings of Islam. The Arabic word 'Quran', literally means reading. The sacred Book is known as Al-Quran, 'The Reading' which refers to the very first revelation which insisted on the 'Reading' of the Prophet though he was illiterate. A believer is, therefore, ordained to read it and understand its meaning, and know what is for him and what is against him. It is a code of right conduct and an expression of the Will of God to whose dictates society and state must conform.

This is the Book revealed to the Prophet Muhammed. Its leading theme is 'Believe and act righteously' which guarantees the welfare of humanity and unites them together. The revelations contained in this book did not come all at once but descended in fragments as and when the need arose. The Prophet received them carefully and not only asked his followers to commit them to memory but also to reduce them to writing. This continued for about twenty-three years of his life after he was entrusted with the mission of Prophethood.

The care with which the revelations were preserved in their original purity is beyond imagination, for the Prophet himself used to recite them, in the month of Ramaḍan, to the fullest extent he received them each year, and also recited the whole of the Quran before he breathed his last. After him, all the parchments on which it was written were collected at the suggestion of Umar in the days of Caliph Abu Bakr who entrusted the task of such collection to Zaid Ibn Thabit who had acted as an amanuensis to the Prophet. The task was accomplished

in a few years and was verified by a committee set up by the Government for this purpose under the presidency of the same Zaid Ibn Thabit. Thus it was collected and verified under the strict supervision of the Government. And it is the Caliph Uthman who preserved this carefully written edition which has been handed down to us. So, the Quran has come to us in the most authentic form and original purity.

There is no Book so widely read and in whose service so much of time and talent is expended as has been the case with the Quran. 'Though the youngest of the epoch-making books, the Quran is the most widely-read book ever written' (Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 126). It is translated into various languages but, in the words of Pickthal, 'the result is not the glorious Koran, that inimitable symphony, the very words of which move men to tears and ecstasy—It can never take the place of the Koran in Arabic'.

The Book stands out, even today, as a miracle in eloquence, for none could produce a single Sura (chapter) of the like thereof, nor could the Prophet himself have produced it so eloquently and in such a noble language, for he was unlettered. The Book is admittedly Divine as it claims : 'And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to our servant (Muhammed), then produce a Sura like there unto ; and call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides God, if your (doubts) are true. But if ye cannot—and of a surety ye cannot—then fear the Fire whose fuel is men and stones—which is prepared for those who reject the faith' (2 : 23, 24). And the Prophet was asked to declare to those who

were in doubt, 'Say ! If the whole of mankind and jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Quran, they could not produce like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support' (17 : 88) ; 'This Quran is not such as can be 'produced' by other than God' (10 : 37). 'We have', says God, 'without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it' (15 : 9). The Quran is, thus, in its pristine purity and eternal form without any corruptions, interpolations and accretions.

This miracle, no doubt, stands on its own merits and is, by far, the most true, because the revelations in their sequence, refer to the past events which neither the Prophet nor anybody else could have known so accurately. Mark the Quranic verses how they assert their Divine character :

'This is part of the tidings of the things unseen, which We reveal unto thee (O Muhammed !). Thou wast not present with them when they cast lots with arrows (to know) which of them should be the guardian of Mary, nor wast thou present with them when they quarrelled thereupon' (3 : 44).

The story relates to the quarrel which arose as to who would be the guardian of Mary, the mother of Jesus. She grew under God's protection and was entrusted to the care of Zakariya. Again we find the same assertion, in the story of Noah, which is a further attestation of the miracle of the Book.

'Such are some of the stories of the Unseen, which We have revealed unto thee (O Muhammed !). Before this neither thou nor thy People knew them. So persevere patiently for the End is for those who are righteous' (11 : 49).

The narrative is connected with the famous Deluge in Noah's time. The recalcitrant son of Noah did not embark on the Ark which was constructed by Noah as a precautionary measure against the Deluge. He did not believe in his father's warning and as a materialist thought of going to mountain peaks in order to save himself. The Deluge swept over the hill and dale and Noah implored God to save his son. But his request was not conceded to as his son was unrighteous. The storm subsided and he came down from his Ark with peace from God. His son and the wife both being disobedient were carried away by the storm.

All this was never known and could not have been known to the Prophet as the Deluge had taken place thousands of years before Christ and, as such, the Book is no other than a Living Miracle which is further proved by the Quranic verse :

'Will they not then ponder on the Quran ? If it had been from other than God they would have found therein much incongruity' (4 : 82).

Chapter II

THEOLOGY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

Theology

Theology is the science which treats of God, His nature and attributes, and His relations with man and the universe.

Islam is built upon five pillars : testimony that there is no god but God and that Muhammed is the Apostle of God, Prayer (Salat), the Poor-due (Zakat), Pilgrimage (Hajj) and Fast (Sawm) in the month of Ramadhan every year.

It is narrated by Abdullah ibn Umar that his father Umar bin Khattab said: 'While we were with the Prophet a person entered dressed in extremely white robes, his hair extremely black, none of us knew him before. He sat down, his knees touching the knees of the Prophet and his hands on the thighs of the Prophet and asked : 'O Apostle of God, what is Islam ?' The Prophet replied : 'That thou should bear witness that there is no god save God and that I am the Apostle of God ; that thou should offer the Prayers (Salat) and give the Poor-due (Zakat) and Fast in the month of Ramadhan and perform Pilgrimage to the House (of God) if thou could afford the journey'. He said : 'Thou hast spoken truly'. Then he asked : 'What is Faith (Iman) ?' The Prophet replied : that thou should believe in His Messengers and in the Last Day, and that thou should believe in His determining (qadar) both of good and evil'. He said: 'Thou hast spoken truly.' He

asked again : 'What is right doing (ihsan)' ? The Prophet replied : 'That thou should serve God as thou seest Him, and if thou seest Him not, He seest thou'. He said : 'Thou hast spoken truly'. He asked once again: 'When shall be the Last Day (al-sa'a)' ? The Prophet replied : 'The questioned knoweth no more of that than the questioner'. Then he rose and went away but Umar stayed longer and the Prophet said : 'Do you know Umar who the questioner was' ? Umar said : 'The Prophet and God only know this well'. The Prophet said, 'That was Jibril (Gabriel), he came to you (people) to teach you your religion'.

So far we have tried to give an idea of the fundamentals of Islam and the ingredients of Faith as they form the pivot of discussion in Theology.

The Theology of Islam owes its development to the interpretation of the text (Quran and the Sunna). The development, as such, could not begin till after the death of the Prophet. So long as he was alive he solved all the problems of faith according to the revelations which he received from time to time. And even after his death the development of Theology could not be thought of as the Muslims were engaged in wars for the spread of Islam. They fought under the absolute sovereignty of God and no question arose as to His Nature and Attributes. It is only when the Muslims settled down peacefully that they started thinking (somewhere in the days of the Caliph Ali) about the Freedom of Man and his relations with God etc.

The religious thought and the conflict therein points to the fact that there have been, in the past, three

forces at work — *naql* (tradition), *'aql* (reason) and *kashf* (inner light that unveils the mysteries). Let us trace their history.

The Tradition or *Naql*

It must be remembered that the traditions of the ancients had a sacred character in the social life of the pagan Arabs. The traditional customs inherited from their forefathers were treated as articles of faith. Each tribe adhering to some such traditions all fell into disunity.

The ten years of the Prophet's life at Madina are marked for the most wonderful achievement in consolidating the warring tribes of the Arabs into a nation under the sovereignty of One God. After his demise the tribes once again raised their head and tried to revert to the state as before Islam but could not succeed as the rebellion was put down with a heavy hand. The Caliph Abu Bakr's policy in this respect is praiseworthy. It revitalized Islam and also put great vigour into its Republic which lasted for thirty years.

This period of Orthodox Caliphs had, no doubt brought a radical change in the character of the Arabs but still the passion for traditional customs continued in a simmering state and burst into flames shortly after the hold of orthodoxy had relaxed and lost control thereof.

Ali, the last of the Orthodox Caliphs, was struck down by the hand of assassin on the 17th Ramadan, 40 A.H. (27th January, 661 A.D.). Mu'awiya declared himself as the Caliph and became the *de facto* ruler of Islamic State. He, thus, founded the Umayyad

dynasty which was followed by 13 others and lasted continuously for ninety years (A.H. 41—132=A.D. 661—750).

With the Umayyads the world of Islam descended to a low ebb in morality and remained in all but name. Their will became their law. Under them a regular system of law was impossible and in consequence the Arab idea of traditional customs reasserted itself. Every thing that was customary was taken to be right and proper and whatever the ancestors had done deserved to be accepted. The office of *Qadi* was created and those who were appointed as *Qadis* enjoyed endless discretion so much so that they based the decision on their arbitrary opinions and traditional customs, hence customs made in-roads upon Islamic Law and Theology could not remain unaffected.

Further, the Umayyads sought aid in their task of government from non-Muslim subjects. Persons like John of Damascus, the great doctor of the Greek Church held the keyposts under the Umayyads. His father Sergius was treasurer and he, after his father's death, became vizier. His writings served to increase the influence of Greek thought and encourage the free use of one's own opinion. As a reaction to all this appeared a new group in the form of Traditionists who stood for the traditions of the Prophet.

This movement of Traditionists dates back to the second century of the Hijra. It was thoroughly a revolt against the then prevailing tendency towards customs. The Traditionists had come to replace the customs with the traditions of the Prophet and, as such, preferred to

rely even on a weak (*da'if*) tradition of the Prophet rather than depend upon a custom. They have waged a relentless war against the Mutazilites (the great lovers of reason), fought mysticism on its own ground and even the Scholastic Theology could not escape their virulent attacks. They categorically rejected all human reason and personal opinion.

Ahmed ibn Hanbal (A.H. 164–241=A.D. 780–855), the founder of the fourth Sunni School, was famous for his apathy to reason. The Hanbalites maintain their devotion to the traditions of the Prophet. Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 A.H.) his great follower and the author of *Fatawa* kept alive the Hanbalite doctrine which passed on to Shaikh Muhammed ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab who was born in the town of 'Uyaynah in Najd in the year 1115 A.H. and died in 1206 A.H. As a rejuvenator of Islam he was second only to Ibn Taymiyyah who advocated return to the Quran and the authentic Sunna of the Prophet and fought against the blind imitation or *taqlid* which had killed the spirit of *ijtehad* (interpretation) and thwarted the growth of serious thinking among the Muslims. The Wahhabi movement started in the later part of the twelfth century (*hijra*) and is still existent in Saudi Arabia.

The Reason or 'Aql

Reason is the intellectual power of faculty which is ordinarily applied in adapting thought or action to some end. It entered the Islamic Theology as concomitant of Greek Philosophy which had been dealt with in our introductory notes. Reason, as has been previously stated, cannot grasp the Unseen.

As to its incompetency, we refer to Kant (1724–1804), a German Philosopher and one of the most important thinkers of the modern times. His philosophy is well known as the critical philosophy whereby he has disclosed the hollowness of reason and the antinomies of philosophers.

He has contrasted criticism with the dogmatism that he imputed to previous philosophers who presumed that the human intellect can arrive at important truths by pure thinking. This sort of presumption is without first having a critical survey of the sources and powers of intellect.

Philosophers, in the past, have assumed that human intelligence had powers which a careful examination shows to be non-existent. They believe that it is possible for a man to arrive by pure thought at truths about entities which in their nature can never be subjects of experience. Their belief, he says, has no proper ground and is not justified.

Metaphysics, regarded as the speculative study of supersensible things such as God, His Attributes and immortality of soul is a sham. He, therefore, thought it wise to get rid of the metaphysics of his predecessors not merely because it involved wasted intellectual effort, but for more serious reasons. Metaphysical arguments on such subjects have little popular effect, and the endless disputes between Metaphysicians serve indirectly to undermine the belief of the common man, for they arouse in him materialism, fatalism, atheism, free-thinking, fanaticism and superstition.

A thorough investigation of the powers of reason

discloses its emptiness and inability to arrive at the truth. Reason according to him, is of no avail and can not unfold the mysteries of Divine Reality.

The Innerlight or *Kashf* (that unveils the Mysteries)

Kashf is said to be the immediate knowledge of an object by the mind without the intervention of any reasoning process. The reason being incapable of fathoming the truth, men resorted to contemplation which is, in fact, a reaction against the intellectualism of the rationalists and the philosophers.

The life of contemplation is not a new thing. It has its origin in heathenism and a heathen is he who holds the religious belief which is neither Christian, Jewish, nor Islamic. We often hear of the Greek and Christian Monks who believed in the effacement of self and lived a secluded life in monasteries. Such monasticism is utterly forbidden in Islam. 'There is no monasticism in Islam' is the saying of the Prophet for Islam is a religion which says 'yes' to life and God has subjected to the use of man all that is in the heavens and on earth (31 : 20)

There were among the Arabs, before the inception of Islam, men who dissatisfied with heathenism held the way of truth to be the right conduct. They were monotheists and never believed in self annihilation but tried to be morally good through a life of self discipline. They are called *hunafa*, plural of *hanif* or one who is sincere and straightforward. The Prophet himself was a *hanif* before his Prophethood and his honesty and truthfulness had earned the title of *amin* or trustworthy. The

cult to which *hunafa* adhered was never in the form of mysticism that exists today.

From the above it is quite evident that the forces of philosophy and mysticism could not gain in strength so long as the Prophet and his Orthodox companions were alive. It is under the rule of the Umayyads (who were free-thinkers and ungodly) that such movements took root.

The Umayyads were with the exception of Umar ibn 'Abd al-Aziz, worldly wise despotic monarchs who had almost shaken off the yoke of religion. They were unmindful of God and, at times, defied Him in their worldly affairs. Their irreligious character combined with pride and cruelty gave cause to insurrection against them which ended in their fall in the year A.H. 132=A.D. 750. This marks the date of the rise of the 'Abbasids.

With the rise of the 'Abbasids the intellectual centre of the empire moved to Baghdad in Iraq. The 'Abbasid period and particularly the first hundred years of their reign are famous for tremendous progress in arts, sciences, medicine and philosophy. Books on Greek Philosophy were translated into Arabic. Plato and Aristotle, thus, came to the Arabs and remained with them as their love and passion. The Greek Philosophy was taken to be an infallible truth, religion also being truth, the Muslim Philosophers made attempts at reconciliation between the two. They were under the charming delusion that the cause of religion was served in this way, while quite reverse was the case. They little knew, what harm they were doing to Islam by introducing

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un-Islamic elements into the religion. The application of philosophy to religion means that there is something doubtful or questionable in religion, for the philosophy takes its rise in scepticism and philosopher is a person who questions the truth.

To save Islam from scepticism and to set aside the evil influence of Greek Philosophy was invented the scholastic theology. Baghdad became the arena of religious polemics in addition to the distinguished position which it occupied as the abode of learning. But with its devastation by Halaku in A.D. 1258, the gloom of night settled on Islam and resulted in the decadence of learning as the Sunni Ulema unanimously passed a verdict that the doors of *ijtihad* (interpretation) be closed. Thereafter came into practice *taqlid* or blind acceptance of what was said or performed before.

Chapter III

GREEK PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy

The word 'philosophy' is derived from the composite Greek noun *Philosophia* which means love or pursuit of wisdom, hence philosopher is a lover of wisdom. In a wider sense it is the pursuit of knowledge of things and their causes. The more advanced study in the mediaeval universities include the three branches of natural, moral and metaphysical philosophy.

Natural philosophy is the knowledge or study of natural objects and phenomena which is now called 'science'. Moral philosophy is the knowledge or study of the principles of human conduct, called ethics. Metaphysical philosophy with which we are concerned, is that department of knowledge or study which deals with ultimate reality. Here it may be mentioned that according to materialism nothing but space-filling physical objects are ultimately real while idealism holds that only spiritual beings are ultimately real and that other things are to be explained as ideas.

The Greek Philosophers :

Pythagoras (500 B.C.)

Pythagoras is said to have been the first to call himself a philosopher or one learned in physical science as well as metaphysical and moral sciences. He taught the transmigration of souls and preached the sanctity of all life. His philosophy is a mechanical and aesthetic

pantheism. With its music and numbers it is a philosophy of the perception of the beautiful. He perceives a harmony and beauty in all the universe and in this way knows the Creator Himself. He may be called a mathematician philosopher as he relied in his philosophy on mathematics.

Socrates (470–399 B.C.)

Next to Pythagoras is Socrates, a philosopher famous for his saying that he knew this much that he knew nothing. He is said to have diverted his attention from physical philosophy to concentrate on the search for definition of universal notions which have a bearing on human conduct. But in the dialogue of Plato called the Republic he (Socrates) is represented as saying that the mathematical studies are a necessary preliminary to philosophical training. A prospective philosopher must learn the inter-connections of various sciences and no one could hope to make a progress who lacked the power of seeing things together. All this is preparatory to the understanding of a system in which all 'forms' (i.e., characters in which individual sensible things may participate) have their places determined by their relation to the supreme Form of good.

He was a man of deep piety with the temperament of a mystic and his strong belief in All-Wise and All-Good God made him neglect the gods that were worshipped in those days. Hence he was indicted for 'impiety' and had to drink the hemlock—a powerful poison. This was the end of the great Athenian philosopher.

Plato (428/427–348/347 B.C.)

Plato was pupil of Socrates and his thought has

been a source of inspiration to the succeeding generations for centuries together. He had a deep love for his teacher who exercised a great influence on his mind.

His philosophy is in the form of dialogues and he refused to write any formal exposition of his own metaphysics and, as such, our knowledge of its final shape has been derived from his commentators who have developed it in the form of neo-Platonism. The statements of Aristotle who owes a great deal to Plato (his teacher) are another source of such knowledge.

Plato's doctrine of 'forms' or 'ideas' as stated by Aristotle is not different from that of Pythagoras. The 'Platonic Ideas' are actually 'numbers' i.e., collection of units which, for example, may be explained in the following way :

Let there be a question : What is justice ? In trying to answer this question we do not simply make a list of individual actions that are called just ; we, instead, try to find the common nature that all just acts share which makes us recognize them as just acts. This common nature or quality which gives them their identity is the form or idea of justice. This can be recognised only by reason. It is this form that constitutes the real identity of each thing. These forms or ideas do not change ; they are the same for every observer as distinct from our individual thoughts in our minds which are private experiences or opinions. Each form or idea is 'exactly what it is' and, on this basis, all such ideas are called more real than the transitory individuals in space and time, the realm of 'becoming' in which instances of 'ideas' appear.

Such 'ideas' are not amenable to sense perception and can only be appreciated by intellect or reason. The ideas, for the reasons set forth above, are called 'Universals' which are real and eternal, while the 'Particulars' of this world are mere appearances and unreal.

Idea, in Platonic sense, is the model for creation and an eternally existing pattern of any class of things, of which the individual things are imperfect copies, and from which they derive their existence. Thus reality consists of unchanging ideas, while, according to Aristotle reality consists not of transcendental ideas, but of individual, observable phenomena, with the application of the human intellect upon them.

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.)

Aristotle is one of those who studied in the famous academy of Plato. He differed from his teacher (Plato) on various points and expounded theories of his own. Unlike Plato who has studied reality as a whole, Aristotle divided reality into several spheres of physics, biology, ethics, politics and psychology and the reality that he studied in these spheres was constituted by the observable facts of actual and concrete individual substances. The essence of his procedure in each field of inquiry was observation of the data coupled with experimental research in the way of dissection with a view to determining the data more exactly. The object of his study was to discover some general theory of permanent character.

In his observation of nature he found a pervading conception of growth which led him to believe in the idea of evolution and this chiefly distinguishes his thought

from that of Plato. Plato had been more deeply interested in 'being' than in 'becoming' which belonged in his view to the deceptive world of fallible sense. He tried to interpret true and permanent being in the light of the permanent truths of mathematics, making number the basis of the universe and identifying matter with space. His universe was thus a static universe.

The universe of Aristotle, on the contrary, is dynamic as it is engaged in becoming. The nature of each thing is a potentiality which moves through a process of development (a process which is also 'nature') to an actuality which is true and final and perfect 'nature'—for 'nature' is the end. The movement which he sees incessantly at work is a movement toward an end immanent from the first in the subject of movement and determining all its growth. This process of evolution is to evolve a thing finally and to give it its perfect nature.

Aristotle applies this general conception not only to developments in the sphere of organic nature but also to constructions in the sphere of human art. The activity of man, alike in the making of a statue, is the activity of realising a plan or 'form' and of causing a material which has the proper potentiality to move toward the 'form' which is also its 'end'. For further clarification he gives an example of the state in his 'Politics' and says that 'by the nature there is an impulse in all men toward political association, but he who first put them together was the cause of the greatest benefits !

Thus God, according to him is the Primary or First cause, which gives movement to the matter that has potentiality to move and brings it to its end or 'form'.

God is, therefore, the Prime Mover. He conceives of God as mind which exists in the universe and causes its development from one form to another just as an architect causes the development of the building till he realizes his plan.

Aristotle marked the existence of God in the constant change that the world is subject to. There must be some one to be the cause of all this change and, therefore, he called God a Necessary Being. The change in the world is indicative of its potentiality to grow, so God does not create the world, nor is there any continuity between God and the World. It has an existence independent of God and co-eternal with Him.

The difference between Platonic 'ideas' and Aristotelian 'forms' has resulted in the difference of conceptions of the nature of God. Plato conceives God as soul, the source of every movement and there is no movement not initiated by soul, Aristotle rejects it on the ground that the efficient cause inherent in things, both living and lifeless is their 'nature' to develop their capacities and soul cannot participate, even incidentally, in such movement. Further, soul is regarded as the 'form' proper to an organic body and God being incorporeal cannot be viewed as a soul but, on the other hand, He is mind engaged in unbroken reflective activity.

According to Aristotle, matter is self moving and from eternity, it does not depend for its existence upon God who is only a Prime Mover.

The world is, thus, the result of a slow process of development of matter. This sort of conception leads one to believe that man as a part of the universe has

got his own capability or potentiality independent of God. The power of man over his actions becomes confirmed. Guided by this idea the Qadariyya Sect (who stand for the free-will of man and are opposed to the Fatalists) rose into Islam and developed into the Mutazilites and are in existence, now, in the form of the Modernists.

To Plato, God is soul and a Perfect Soul, wherein mind inheres. He is, thus, All in All and the Ultimate Reality, World is but an illusion and unreal. This is further explained by the neo-Platonic idea of the One. The One of Plotinus, the great commentator on Plato, is the source of everything and is not the cause of anything. Things emanate from it but are not caused by it. The world flows from God just as the rays flow from the sun and return to it while it remains the same. God is thus the Only One and nothing exists outside Him.

According to this conception, nothing is other than God. 'Otherness' of objects is totally denied whereas Islam admits the 'otherness' of created things, for God has created them consciously and with a definite purpose. Plato has drawn freely upon Pythagoreanism which is essentially pantheism. The early school of Greek Philosophy, the Ionian, in as far as it admitted the theism, was nothing but Pantheism. Speusippus the Plato's successor in his Academy, has been far ahead of his times in his conception of the unity of Existence, for he taught that the Divine or Best is first indeed in rank but is chronologically the last product of development. He may, therefore, be called an ultra-pantheist.

Neo-Platonism with its conception of this world as

an illusion has driven men into retirement. Salvation of man, as Plato himself taught, lies in the life of contemplation, in the acquirement of the true knowledge of supersensible realities, and in turning his attention away from interests in the particular things around him.

This has given birth to the Jabriyya or Fatalists who under the conception of All-Powerful God found themselves absolutely powerless, their salvation resting upon the union with God. Consequently they discarded the fleeting world and became mystics or *sufis* as they are called in Islam. They exist even now and are formed into fraternities with their emphasis on the unity of Being and the Unity of Existence, *i.e.*, none except God is existent. This means God is all and all is God—Pantheism in the extreme.

Here we refer to the two prominent schools of mysticism to show the influence of Greek Philosophy upon the Theology of Islam.

Shihab al-Din al-Suharwardi (A.H. 549-587=A.D. 1155-1191) who is better known as Shaikh Al-Ishraq, was a great Sufi thinker of his time. *Hikmat Al-Ishraq* (Philosophy of Illumination) is his masterpiece. In his writings he has drawn upon Pythagoreanism and Platonism to a large extent and is critical of Avicenna (Ibn Sina) who following in the footsteps of Aristotle held that existence is principal and the essence of a thing is dependent for its reality upon its existence. In other words it is existence which gives reality to the essence of a thing. This is rejected by al-Suharwardi to whom the essence is reality and existence only an accident added to the essence.

For him, the essence is all important and the Divine

essence is the Pure Light and the source of all existence. The relation of man to God is that of the ray of light to the sun. The soul of man is restless, as is the ray, till it is again absorbed in the Divine light. Here is again the fatal influence of Greek Philosophy, the theory of emanation enunciated by Plotinus has made its appearance. The mystic thought of al-Suharwardi was, therefore, considered to be heretical and he was put to death in the days of the famous Salahuddin Ayyubi in the year 1191 A.D.

There is yet another mystic of great repute called Shaikh Akbar or the greatest of the mystics. His full name is Abu Bakr Muhammed but he is well-known as ibn Arabi, the Revivifier of Religion (Mohyi al-Din). He was born in Muricia in southern Spain in A.H. 560=A.D. 1165 and died in Damascus in A.H. 638=A.D. 1240. His outstanding work is *Fusus Al-Hikam* or Gems of Wisdom. According to him, man's body as a microcosm (*alam saghir*) corresponds to the macrocosm (*alam kabir*) of God. To him, there is a similarity between the spirit of man and that of God. Just as the spirit of man rules the body God rules the world.

Further, God created this world because He wanted to be known. The world is, therefore, a mirror wherein God sees Himself. Things are, thus, the reflection of God. In other words there is no 'otherness' between God and the World.

As remarked by Iqbal, the Philosopher poet, the mystic thought of Ibn Arabi, is thoroughly permeated with Pantheism.

All this is the product of Idealistic Philosophy of

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All this is the product of Idealistic Philosophy of

Plato whereby men try to be absorbed in God and lose their identity like a drop into the ocean, hence a great loss to the community and a setback to the progress.

Let us have a survey of the ingenuity of the Muslim Philosophers.

Chapter IV

MUSLIM PHILOSOPHERS

**Al-Kindi, Abu Yousuf, Yaqub ibn Ishaq (A.H. 185-252
=A.D. 801-866)**

He was born in Basra (Iraq) and owing to his great intellect he is called the 'Philosopher of the Arabs'. He made a systematic study of the Greek Philosophy at Baghdad which was the centre of learning under the Abbasids, and rendered into Arabic the philosophical works of the Greek. His great erudition entitled him to a high position at the court of the Caliph Al-Mamun. Reason was to him a revelation. He drank deep of the Greek Philosophy and wrote treatises on metaphysics, logic and natural sciences. His God was the Necessary Being of Aristotle while his theory of creation is similar to that of the emanatory process evolved by Plotinus. Being a Mutazili of severe type, he fell into disgrace in the days of al-Motawakkil and died in a state of obscurity.

Al-Farabi, Abu Nasr (A.H. 257-338=A.D. 870-950)

He was born at Wasij in Farab in the province of Khurasan and went to Baghdad to study logic and philosophy. Intelligent as he was, he soon distinguished himself as the greatest philosopher of Islam and was called the 'Second Teacher' (*al-Mu'allim al-thani*), Aristotle himself being the First. In his metaphysics he unravelled the mysteries of Greek Philosophy and put forward his own solution of metaphysical and ontological

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problems. Aristotle had become passion with him yet he was enamoured of neo-Platonic concept of emanation. His stay at Baghdad was not long, for he was soon included in the literary circle of Saif al-Dawlah al-Hamdani and died at Aleppo.

Like all other Muslim philosophers he tried to reconcile the Greek Philosophy with the religion. In his opinion Aristotle and Plato were inspired by the Divine revelation. He has interpreted the Aristotelian theory of the eternity of the world in a peculiar way.

The word eternity, represents the point when the world was first brought into existence by God. The world, according to him, cannot be compared to a house which is built bit by bit, some of its parts preceding the others in time. The world having come into existence as a whole, its creation cannot be construed to have been in time, for the time itself begins with its creation. Thus, he supports the idea of his master that the world exists from eternity.

His treatment of the creation of the world is in the same neo-Platonic style, for he believed in the theory of emanation and lived the life of a mystic.

Ikhwan al-Safa or **Sincere Brethren** (Around A.D. 955 or middle of the fourth Century A.H.)

This society existed at al-Basra with their programme to base the religion on rationalism and to introduce among the educated people a complete change in their religious ideas. They propagated their cause in secret by means of clubs and issued for this purpose some 52 tracts. Their aim was similar to that of the Mutazilites, Greek Philosophy being the Divine Truth. Their ideas combined in them the philosophy of Plato, Pythagoras and Aristotle.

Neo-Platonic mysticism and Aristotelian natural science formed the texture of their thought and they had a great reverence for Pythagoras who believed in the transmigration of soul.

Avicenna or ibn Sina (A.H. 370-428=A.D. 980-1037)

He was of a Persian origin. Born near Bukhara he won the title of Shaikh al-Rais (The Distinguished Leader). He was a versatile genius and soon mastered logic, mathematics, physics, metaphysics and medicine. His tenacious memory enabled him to get by heart the whole of the Quran by the age of ten. It is said of him that whenever he was confronted with any difficulty he would go to the mosque and supplicate God for solution.

His life was full of wanderings from place to place. He had to leave Bukhara as the Orthodox Mahmud of Ghazna, whom he wanted to avoid, became all powerful. After many hardships he ultimately reached Hamadan where he died in peace.

His philosophy though based upon Aristotelian principles is not without the tinge of neo-Platonism. He wrote a large number of treatises on metaphysics, psychology, cosmology and logic. Besides his philosophical works there are several books on medicine. His philosophy includes among other subjects, the relation of Cause and Effect, Universals and Particulars, Matter and Force. *Al-Shifa* (the Remedy) is his monumental work wherein he has discussed religious problems philosophically.

In his study of Being, he makes a distinction between the essence and existence. Although the existence is added to the essence of a thing yet it is first in importance,

essence being dependent upon it. When a person thinks about something he distinguishes between its essence and existence. It is existence which gives reality to essence.

According to him God is the Necessary Being. He alone is self-subsistent. All other existing objects have their existence added to their essence as accident and are, therefore, contingent beings. The Universe is, thus, contingent as it is entirely dependent for its existence upon God, the Giver of Existence. The Universe and whatever it contains are contingent or possible beings.

His aim is to bring neo-Platonism into union with Peripateticism (system of Aristotelian philosophy). Instead of an utter discontinuity between God and the Universe, he tries to show the continuity that exists between God and the Universe in the Plotinian manner of emanationism with some adjustments. This is the inconsistency in the philosophical doctrine of the Muslim Philosophers. Al-Ghazzali has pointed out this inconsistency and has accused them of trying to combine Aristotelian concept of cause with the Plotinian emanationism. He, in his famous work *Tahafut al-Falasifa* (the Incoherence of the Philosophers), has pointed out the self-contradictory ideas of the philosophers and their heretic views.

Al-Ghazzali (A.H. 450-505=A.D. 1058-1111)

He was a bold critic of the Muslim Philosophers, though he was once a philosopher himself. The philosophy they studied, he says, led them to heresies. Farabi and Ibn Sina, the two great masters of Greek Philosophy, have been accused of introducing un-Islamic elements into the religion. Such persons cannot be excused, for

they have engendered heretical tendencies among the Muslims.

For his endeavours to have sufism admitted into the Orthodox Islam he deserves special treatment under a separate chapter, so we deal with him later on.

So far we have discussed the role played by the Muslim Philosophers of the Eastern wing of Islam who were born and bred in the Eastern countries with Baghdad as the seat of learning. There are still three more prominent philosophers, Ibn Bajja, Ibn Tufayl and Ibn Rushd, who belong to the Western wing, in the southern part of Spain, where Cordova was the centre of attraction for scholars.

Ibn Bajja, Abu Bakr (A.D. 1000-1038)

He closely followed al-Farabi in logic, physics and metaphysics. He was a rationalist to the core and not a pious Muslim. Man, he said, must live rationally and give reason for each and every action. Self-development and knowledge could be acquired by reason alone and not by mystic exercises. Reason was everything for him and he believed in its supremacy.

Ibn Tufayl (A.D. 1100-1185)

He was born in Granada in Spain. His reputation as a philosopher and physician won for him the highest honour as vizier and physician to Amir, Abu Yaqub. He led a calm and contemplative life and like Ibn Bajja believed that truth could be achieved by thought alone. But his thought ultimately developed into mysticism and in this resembles al-Ghazzali to whom Sufi life was the best way to salvation.

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In his famous work *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* (The living Son of the Awake) he has presented the philosophy of his time and tried to prove that philosophy and religion, in their final reach, are one and the same. He entertained the idea that philosophy is for the elite and the learned who can appraise its value and understand its worth. The masses should be left to be guided by the general principles of religion.

Ibn Rushd (A.D. 1126-1198)

Born in Cordova in Spain he received his basic education of the Asharite School of Theology and was also trained in law. It was Abu Yaqub who encouraged him to study philosophy. He studied Aristotelian philosophy and perfected himself to such a degree that he was considered to be the greatest commentator on Aristotle. He followed the path of the Greek Philosophy and also acted as a judge in different parts of Spain where the Arabs ruled. In his advanced age he was banished from Cordova under the charge of heresy but the decree of exile was soon recalled and he was restored to his former position. He died in Morocco.

Great was the influence which Greek Philosophy exercised upon him, for he accepted it as truth. To him, there was no difference between philosophy and theology, they were two phases of one truth. Philosophers, he said, must have freedom to go their own way provided their speculations did not spread beyond their own circle to agitate the minds of the commonalty. These were his ideas and on this account he subjected al-Ghazzali to a severe criticism. He hurled his attacks on him for his

Tahafut al-Falasifa (the Incoherence of the Philosophers) and tried to refute it with all the force that his pen could command. His main accusation against al-Ghazzali was that he took a wrong view of philosophy in writing that book ; further he committed a blunder in trying to bring the knowledge of philosophy within the reach of the masses and in declaring to them that there was nothing esoteric in philosophy.

In the opinion of ibn Rushd, philosophy is not for the ignorant multitude but for the intellectual elite. Philosophy has the capacity to bring about a reform in religion. The importance of philosophy is manifest in the fact that the Quran itself exhorts men to reflect and speculate.

And this can be performed only through the use of intellect. Philosophers, therefore, must have the liberty to interpret the Quran and find out the inner meaning in case there is anything externally to contradict the literal meaning of the text. The literal meaning is the study of the masses and interpretation the duty of the philosophers. Such passages as are allegorical and do not yield to the literal meaning must fall to the philosophers for their interpretation.

His metaphysics is essentially concerned with the study of Being. To him, there is nothing except God and He alone is the Being of all things. He believes in the immortality of soul which, according to him is a spiritual substance that proceeds from God and returns to Him after the death of man. Souls are, thus emanations from God. Here again is the fatal influence of Plotinus and the Platonic philosophy.

From the foregoing it becomes abundantly clear that

the Muslim Philosophers not only upheld the views of both Plato and Aristotle but also tried to reconcile religion with their philosophic ideas and, thus, have been a source of inspiration to both the Mysticism (*i.e.*, Sufism) and the Mutazilism (which has taken the form of Modernism).

The Mutazilites, who are lovers of reason, interpret the Quranic verses in their own way and have subjected their doctrines to the theoretical reasoning of Aristotle, while the Sufis, led by Idealistic philosophy of Plato, have resorted to the life of contemplation. Both these ways are not acceptable to Islam which insists upon active life and makes reasoning subservient to the Quran and not to override it, for pure reason is full of contradictions.

MYSTICISM

Its Rise in Islam

The word 'mysticism' stands for 'sufism' or *tasawwuf* as it is called in Islam. Sufism has a long course of history and was introduced into Islam as a result of the interpretation of the Quran in the light of the Greek Philosophy.

The Jabariyya or Fatalists came into existence as a result of the interpretation of such Quranic verses as these :

‘And God leadeth astray whom He wills and guideth aright whom He wills, and He is Exalted in Power, full of Wisdom’ (14 : 4); ‘And those whom God leads astray, no one can guide’ (13 : 33); ‘God hath set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, and on their eyes is a covering, great is the penalty they incur’ (2 : 7); ‘He forgiveth whom He pleaseth, and He punisheth whom He pleaseth’ (5 : 20).

Applying their reason, in the manner of Greek Philosophy, to the above passages they came to the conclusion that there was no free will, nor choice for man; everything is predestined. They felt that no amount of righteous acts could save them from the wrath of God and His punishment. This concept of God was so terrifying to them that they laboured under a horrible consciousness of sin and consequently renounced the world and went into seclusion. This marks the beginning of asceticism in Islam

Asceticism and Quietism

Asceticism is a practice of the ascetics who are extremely rigorous in self-discipline. This fast developed into

quietism (passive attitude towards life) and, then, into mysticism.

Mysticism has been defined as a belief in the possibility of union with the Divine nature by means of ecstatic contemplation. A mystic relies on inner light as a means of acquiring knowledge of mysteries inaccessible to understanding.

In trying to examine whether the new form of sufism, referred to above, in our introductory notes is in any way different from the above definition, we find a great difference between the Sufism as it started and the Sufism as it developed in the course of time. In its original form it is the strict following of the model behaviour of the Prophet which according to Aisha (wife of the Prophet) was the reproduction, in practice, of the Quran. But as the Islamic state of Madina expanded into an empire, drawing into its fold people of different modes of thought, Sufism underwent a radical change. The doctrine of ecstatic states and stages was formulated which accompanied by the technical terms, represents a departure from its original form.

The Platonic 'ideas' with their emphasis on the unreality of the World have been the chief cause in giving a baser turn to this movement. Instead of improving their morals and believing in God, men started aiming at their union with God. This they attempted not in an orthodox way but by emotional experiences, involving love, and by following the guidance of their inner light. A sufi, as such, came to be known as a Muhammadan mystic who ultimately adopted pantheistic views.

A mystic or sufi is, therefore, considered to be a traveller toward God through a series of ascending stations

(*maqamat*) and states (*ahwal*) until he is completely merged in God (*fana fi Allah*). To reach this state he adopts a particular ritual (*dhikr*) which consists in repeating the names and attributes of God accompanied by certain formulas. Added to these are dancing and playing on drums and pipes.

Sufism

Sufism has been defined in various ways but etymologically they are not correct. The Arabic word *tasawwuf* used for mysticism is derived from *sūf*, i.e., wool as the mystics or sufis clad themselves in rough and coarse wool just to hide their nakedness.

Ibn Khaldun refers to al-Qushayri who says: 'No etymology or analogy can be found for this term in the Arabic language. It is obvious that it is a nickname. The most obvious etymology, if one uses one, is that which connects the word with *as-suf*, because sufis as a rule were characterised by the fact that they wore woolen garments, (*Muqaddimah*, vol. 3, p. 76 tr. Frauz Rosenthal).

According to Muhammed Faharshafqa there was no trace of the word *tasawwuf* in the Arabic language, nor was it known in the days of the Prophet and his companions (*Al-Tasawwuf*, p. 12, Cairo, 1970). 'The individual surname *al-sufi* appeared in history in the second half of the eighth century with Jabir ibn Haiyan, a *shii* alchemist of Kufa, who professed an ascetic doctrine of his own (*Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1961, p. 579). For Jahiz the word sufism applied to a semi *shii* school of Muslim mysticism which originated in Kufa, the last head of which 'Abdak al-Sufi died in Baghdad about 210 A.H./825 A.D. The name sufi was at first confined to Kufa.

Sufism spread with rapidity and 'within fifty years it denoted all the mystics of Iraq, and two centuries later sufis was applied to the whole body of Muslim mystics (*Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 579). The Sufis assert that there is a dynamic character in the science of hearts (*Ilm al-Kulub*), it traces their itinerary (*safar*) to God, marks it by a dozen stages (*maqamat*) and steps (*ahwal*).

Without laying stress on the individual variants of this mystic itinerary the Sufis aimed especially at defining the ultimate goal, when triumphing over its attachment to the flesh the soul finds the true God to whom it is aspiring, the Real (*Al-Haqq*), a word used as early as the third century A.H. and perhaps borrowed from the pseudo-theory of Aristotle—See *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 581.

The Sufis are, thus, one with God. Ibn Khaldun points out that the Hadith scholars and jurists who discuss the articles of Faith often mention that God is separate from His creatures, the speculative theologians state that He is neither separate nor connected, the philosophers say that He is neither in the world nor outside it, the recent Sufis declare that He is one with the creatures, in the sense that He is incarnate in them, or in the sense that He is identical with them and there exists nothing but Himself either (in the) whole or (in) any part of it (See *Muqaddimah*, p. 83).

He proceeds further and says : 'A number of recent Sufis who consider intuitive perceptions to be scientific and logical, hold the opinion that the Creator is one with His creatures in His identity, His existence, and attributes. They often assume that this was the opinion of the philoso-

phers before Aristotle, such as Plato and Socrates' (*Muqaddimah*, p. 85). He adds 'The recent Sufis who speak of the removal (of the veil) and supersensory perception have delved deeply into these (subjects). Many of them turned to (the theory of) incarnation and oneness, as we have indicated. That was done, for instance by al-Harawi in the *Kitab al-Maqamat*, and by others. They were followed by Ibn Al-Arabi and Ibn Sab'in and their pupils, and then by al-Arif (Afif ad-din), Ibn al-Farid, and Najm-ad-din al-Israeli, in the poem they composed' (*Muqaddimah*, p. 92).

He stated further : 'The earlier Sufis who were mentioned in (al-Qushayri's *Risala*), those outstanding Muslims to whom we have referred above, had no desire to remove the veil and to have such (supernatural) perception. Their concern was to follow their models and to lead an exemplary life as far as possible. Whenever they had a (supernatural) experience they turned away from it and paid no attention to it. Indeed they tried to avoid it (*Muqaddimah*, p. 102).

Such are, indeed, the pious Muslims who followed in the footsteps of the Prophet and never deviated from *Sharia*. We have great respect for them. But sufism in later stage deteriorated and most of the recent Sufis are misled and strayed, for they have turned to the theory of incarnation and oneness with God as remarked by Ibn Khaldun.

In the earliest period Sufism taught how to improve one's morals, build up one's inner and outer life in order to attain perpetual bliss. Its subject-matter was the purification of soul and following in the footsteps of the

Chosen One (*i.e.*, the Prophet). And this is reflected in the lives of the early Sufis like al-Hasan al-Basri (d. A.H. 110=A.D. 728), and Ibrahim ibn Adham (A.H. 161=A.D. 777). The former was a great sage of his time and commanded enormous influence over a wide area of his followers, while the latter had in him the royal blood but took to the life of an ascetic, left Bulkh in Afghanistan and went to al-Basra and then to Mecca. The main theme of their teachings was obedience to God and contemplation of death.

Thereafter a period came when renunciation of the world formed the leading theme of Sufism. Daud ibn Nusayr (d. A.H. 165) used to say : Flee from men as you flee from a lion, fast from the world until you die. And al-Fudayl (d. A.H. 187) actually renounced this world and lapsed into the passivity of quietism.

This represents the gloomy aspect of Sufism but soon it rebounded on revelry and expressions of human love and worldly wine were employed to show the state of ecstasy. Ma'ruf al-Karkhi (d. A.H. 257) and his great disciple Sari al-Saqati (d. A.H. 257) are the typical examples who revelled in such expressions and used the word *tawhid* to signify the union of soul with God. Bishr al-Hafi (barefooted) went to such extent as to speak of God as the Beloved (*habib*). He died in A.H. 227, and was supposed to be a great mystic or *sufi*.

With Dhun-Nun, the Egyptian Sufi (d. A.H. 25), was ushered in an era of greater advancement as the doctrine of ecstatic states and stations (*ahwal* and *maqamat*) was formulated. He wrote treatises expounding the mystical doctrines of Sufism and in consequence it reached its final

stage in the form of Pantheism.

Abu Yazid al-Bistami (d. A.H. 261=A.D. 876) is the one who belongs to the earliest pantheistic school. He was of a Persian stock and an ascetic of the highest rank.

The name of al-Bistami is closely associated with his saying : 'Beneath my cloak there is none but God'. Junayd of Baghdad (d. A.H. 297=A.D. 900), was held in respect as a master in theology and the greatest of the Sufis.

In his person Sufism is said to have appeared in its purest form. 'Our system of doctrine', says he, 'is firmly bound up with the dogmas of Faith, the Quran and the Traditions', yet he discussed the questions of *tawhid* before his pupils behind closed doors and defined a *Sufi* as 'dead to his self and alive in God' which indicates his trend towards self-abnegation.—His disciple al-Shibli (d. A.H. 334=A.D. 945), gave himself completely to the contemplative life and used in his verses vocabulary of amorous intercourse with God.

Abu Talib al-Makki (d. A.H. 386) is famous for his book on Sufism wherein he has openly dealt with questions on *tawhid* in the Sufi sense and was held to be a heretic. *Tawhid*, in sufism, means the Unity of Being (*Wahdat al-Wujud*) according to which God alone is the Absolute Being. He alone is existent all else being mere illusion. The greatest of all the pantheists is al-Hallaj, Abu Abdulla al-Husain bin Mansur, a disciple of al-Junayd. His pantheistic utterance 'I am the Truth (God)', led to his crucifixion in A.H. 300=A.D. 921. Let us see what pantheism is in all its probability.

Pantheism is a belief that God and the Universe are

Define

identical (implying a denial of the transcendence of God). God is conceived as everything and everything as God.

The word 'Pantheism' may be traced back to the Greek Pan 'all' Theos 'God': The theory that God is all. It is, in its origin, the doctrine of the identity of God and the material universe. This doctrine stands mid way between atheism and dogmatic theism. A philosopher may deny the existence of God altogether or accept His existence as the Primary or First Cause of all things and leave unexplained the nature of the relation between God as cause and other existences as effect. Pantheism assumes the identity of the cause and effect. It obliterates the distinction between the Creator and the creature and asserts that there is no 'otherness', hence God is everything and everything God. In other words God is all and all is God while the 'otherness' of the created things (khalq) is definitely established by the Quran and the Traditions of the Prophet. Creatures, humble and lowly, cannot be identical with Almighty God.

Sufism, under the influence of neo-Platonism is converted into Pantheism and in consequence (1) it denies the 'otherness' of objects, for things are not regarded as other than God but identical with Him (2) it does not accept the existence of anything other than God. Thus God alone is existent and He is everything: He is the only Being, upon whom all things depend, from whom they proceed and in whom they subsist.

With the abolition of 'otherness' and establishment of identity between God and man there remains neither *sharia* nor formalities of religion. Hence a Sufi is not bound to follow the religion which is a code for the im-

perfect. Says Dr. Valiuddin :

'When neo-Platonism found its way in Sufism its first consequence was that the 'Otherness' (*Ghairiat*) of objects was denied. The 'otherness' of the created things is clearly emphasised in the Quran. Under the influence of the teaching of Plotinus phenomenal things were regarded not as other than God but identical with Him. God alone is, and other than God, in essence as well as in existence, is merely non-existent! Everything is He (*Hamāost*)! The necessary outcome of the negation of the 'essences' of things and, 'otherness' of things was heresy and *ibahat* (i.e., regarding everything as permissible). There was now no further need of following the *Shariat* (The Law), the antithesis of the Law and the path (*Tariqat*) was presented for the first time and thus a campaign was launched to throw off the yoke of Islamic Code. Islamic Code was regarded as the creed of the imperfect, it was considered unnecessary for the perfect to follow it, even the very conception of any other being save God was impossible. *Shariat* is compulsory so far as one has to admit 'otherness' when 'otherness' has been got rid of and God alone remained, there is no need to follow *Shariat*. 'To follow beauty is the work of women and to follow majesty that of men.' The science of *Shariat* is 'book knowledge' (*Ilm-i-Safina*) but the Science of *Tariqat* is 'heart knowledge' (*Ilm-i-Sina*) which is bequeathed from one mind to another since aeons, it is an arcane secret 'a veiled mystery' (*The Quranic Sufism*, pp. 14-15).

The veiled mystery of Sufism has thus resulted in a complete departure from the *Sharia*. In contrast to the formal use of the five daily prayers a constantly prayerful

Its bad effect

attitude assumed importance. 'In the Quran (33 : 41)', says Macdonald, 'the believers are exhorted to 'remember (*dhikr*) God often', this command the Sufis obeyed with a correlative depreciation of the five canonical prayers. Their meetings for the purpose, much like our own prayer meetings, still more like the class-meetings of the early Methodists, as opposed to stated public worship, were called *dhikrs*. These services were fiercely attacked by the Orthodox theologians, but survived and are the dervish functions which tourists still go to see at Constantinople and Cairo. But the more private and personal *dhikrs* of individual Sufis, each in his house repeating the Quranic litanies through the night, until to the passer-by it sounded like the humming of bees or the unceasing drip of roof gutters, these seem, in the course of the third century, to have fallen before ridicule and accusations of heresy (*Development of Muslim Theology*, pp. 178-179).

The Sufi Doctrine of Unity of Being (*Wahdat al-Wujud*) sweeps away the distinction between man and God, between Islam and other religions. Further, it leaves no room for reward and punishment when it is admitted that nothing exists except God, Who is to be rewarded and punished by God when there is nothing and He alone is existent? This is why, says Dr. Zaki Mubarak, most of the Sufis consider themselves free from religious duties and lead the life of a recluse (*Al-Tasawwuf al-Islami*, vol. 1, p. 181; Fahrashafqa, *Al-Tasawwuf*, p. 72). And, according to Nicholson, Islam becomes meaningless if owing to the Doctrine of Unity of Being the very Article of Faith 'There is no god except God' is taken to mean 'Nothing is existent except God.' (Fahrashafqa, *Al-*

Tasawwuf, p. 72). Here we refer to the famous book *Talbis Iblis* (The Artifice of Satan) written by Imam Abi al-Faraj 'Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Jawzi (d. 596 A.H.) who has discussed, at great length, the Sufi Doctrines, pointing out, at the same time, the right path to be followed. There is also another book *Masr'a al-Tasawwuf* (*Tasawwuf in Conflicting State*) written by Allama Burhanuddin Al-Baqai (d. 885 A.H.) edited by Abd al-Rahman al-Vakil Cairo, 1953, which may be described as a critical study of the Sufi literature produced by Ibn Arabi and Ibn al-Farid. These two books supply the reader with further information on Sufism.

Again, importance is attached to miraculous powers to show the superiority of Sufi and ecstasy is regarded the sole end to sink into the Divine Oneness and become unconscious of the surroundings. Sufi, thus, passes from the scene of multiplicity into the vast sea of God's unity where no cares abound. He is lost to society as he ceases to be its active member and thinks himself at the gate of God Who must provide him with all the necessities of life. This is an abuse of *tawakkul* (dependence upon God) and leads men to inactivity and inertness. They gave up their trades and professions; they even gave up the asking for alms. Their ideal was to be absolutely at God's disposal, utterly cast upon His direct sustenance (*rizq*). No anxiety for their daily bread was permitted to them; they must go through the world separated from it and its needs and looking up to God. Only one who can do this is properly an acknowledger of God's unity, a true *Muwahhid* (Macdonald, *Development of Muslim Theology*, p. 179).

~~Sufism, as such, sends men to sleep while Islam exhorts them to work and to try all other resources and then depend upon God. 'Tie your camel (to protect it) and trust in God' said the Prophet.~~

Qtn.

From the above it is evident that Sufism in its earliest stage was nothing but closely to follow the *Shariat* and thereafter it changed its direction and was converted into pantheism—why? Is it due to neo-Platonism or some other causes?

Ans.

There is a conflict of opinion as to the factors which have influenced Muslim theological thinking, and whether they are new or mainly indigenous. To the orientalists like Alfred Von Kremer (*Gebiete des Islams*, p. 8), C. H. Becker (*Christliche Polemik U. Islamische Dogmenbildung*, in *Zeitschrift fur Assyriologic*, XXVI 1911, pp. 175-195), and others, such factors are new and external, while Montgomery Watt says that the external influences were no doubt at work but they were never the sole causes (*Free-will and Predestination in Early Islam*, p. 3), and according to Wensinck they were indigenous (*The Muslim Creed*, p. 52).

Influence To probe into the main causes we fall back upon the original sources and other authorities. As regards Sufism Al-Shahrastani points to the influence exercised on it by the Platonic Philosophy and calls Plato as Al-Shajkh al-Unane (Muhammad Fahrashafqa, *Al-Tasawwuf*, p. 16), while Ibn Khaldun (*Muqaddimah*, vol. 3, p. 85), speaks of the Sufis as guided by philosophers before Aristotle such as Plato and Socrates. What is more, Ibn Arabi, the Shaikh Akbar (The greatest of the Sufis) admits that he assimilated what he read of the Greek Philosophy, Judaism,

Christianity and Islam and then he turned the whole of it into the speculation of philosopher of penetrating insight rarely to be found (Dr. Zaki Mubarak, *Al-Tasawwuf al-Islami*, vol. 1, p. 201; Muhammad Fahrashafqa, *Al-Tasawwuf*, p. 77).

There are some who are of the opinion that Sufism is derived from Judaism and particularly from Christianity but Christianity itself, according to Dr. Zaki Mubarak (*Al-Tasawwuf al-Islami*, vol. 1, p. 201) has derived mysticism from Greek philosophy and Nicholson speaking of the Qadarites, the Jabarites, the Mutazilites and finally the Asharites says that all these speculations, influenced as they were by Greek theology and philosophy, reacted powerfully upon Sufism (*The Mystics of Islam*, p. 6).

This is further supported by the historical fact that the Greek philosophy is much older than Christianity and spread far and wide as the Romans carried it to the countries which they conquered. With the passage of time some of these countries came under the domination of the Arabs who, thus, had free and direct intercourse with the conquered and, as a natural result imbibed the ideas and spirit of Greek philosophy which we have explained in the preceding pages. Added to this is the religious tolerance of the Umayyads and the translation of the Greek works into Arabic in the days of the Abbasids which exercised a profound influence upon Sufism and diverted its course from *Shariat* to Pantheism, which is evident from its vocabulary.

'From the fourth century (A.H.) infiltration from Greek Philosophy, which had been continually increasing since the early Karmatian gnostics and the physician Razi

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down to Ibn Sina, brought into existence a more correct metaphysical vocabulary implying the immateriality of the spirit (*rūh*) and of the soul, the consideration of general ideas, the chain of secondary causes. But this vocabulary became amalgamated with the Pseudo-theology of Aristotle, with Platonic idealism and the Plotinian doctrine of emanation, which influenced profoundly the further development of Sufism' (*Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 581).

Greek philosophy is, thus, the main source of influence upon Sufism but the Sufis trace its origin to the Quran, particularly to the story of Khadir, and on the side of the traditions, to the bequest of Ali. Nicholson in his *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, points out that the Sufis infer from the story of Al-Khadir that every Quranic verse and each word of it is invested with esoteric meaning which is revealed by God, in the moments of their ecstasy, to those only whom He loves most. From this one can imagine how easy it is for the Sufis to cite from the Quran in support of their statements and then contend that *tasawwuf* is a secret knowledge bequeathed by Ali Ibn Abi Talib. Thus, the interpretations, by the Sufis of the teachings of Islam are imported by various ways and means to which there is no limit and which are often contradictory to the religion and to the duties attached to it. (*Fahrashafqa, Al-Tasawwuf*, pp. 27-28).

Khadir

This is, in the main, what Nicholson thinks of Sufism and its secret knowledge. Here we have to explain what is meant by the story of Khadir. This story as given under Chapter 18 of the Quran is that Moses was to go and meet a servant of God (18 : 65), whom the traditions assign the name of Khadir. The object of such meeting was to receive

something of the especial knowledge which God had bestowed upon Khadir.

Moses then proceeded with Khadir and when they were in a boat, Khadir scuttled it. Again they proceeded and when they met a young man Khadir slew him. Further, Khadir asked the inhabitants of a town for hospitality which they refused point-blank, but Khadir instead of being angry with them rebuilt for them a falling wall without any compensation.

Asked to explain the reasons for all his acts Khadir replied to Moses that he scuttled the boat to save it as there was a certain king who seized on every boat by force; he slew the youth as he feared that the youth would grieve his parents by his obstinate rebellion against God; he rebuilt the falling wall as it belonged to two orphans and beneath it was a treasure intended for them by their pious father who had died.

The story of Khadir, as above, has nothing strange about it but the Sufis infer from it that the Quran is possessed of inner meaning. According to Ibn Abbas, the Quranic verse (18 : 65) relating to this story refers to the fact that it was all from the knowledge of God which He bestowed upon Khadir and Khadir did nothing of his own accord. This is proved by the verse (18 : 82) which is explained by Tabari (in his *Tafsir*) that all that was done by Khadir was in obedience to the Will of God and by His command. It is, as such, a case wherein the command of God was carried out.

From the foregoing it becomes clear that the story of Khadir has nothing concealed in it except that Khadir did what was revealed to him by God (*Fahrashafqa, Al-Tasaw-*

wuf, p. 23). Further, the story of Khadir, as stated by Ibn Taymiyya, is consistent with the *Sharia* and not opposed to it. What Khadir did was permissible in law. He scuttled the boat to save it from a greater loss and this is permissible as the Prophet allowed the shepherd to slaughter the goat which, he feared, would die. Similarly, it was lawful for Khadir to slay the youth who would rebel against God. Says Ibn Abbas : 'If you could know about the youngmen what Khadir knew about that youth, then you should slay them but not otherwise'. So far as rebuilding of a falling wall is concerned, it is a pious act to build it without compensation (Fahrashafqa, *Al-Tasawwuf*, p. 30).

Other stories about Khadir that he was granted an ever-lasting life and that Ilyas is a Pole or *Qutb* (topmost saint) are false and the traditions quoted in this regard are not reliable (Fahrashafqa, *Al-Tasawwuf*, p. 31). According to the Quranic verse (21 : 34) none was granted the life that shall last for ever. Further, it is mentioned in the Quran : Behold! God took the covenants of the Prophets, saying : 'I give you a Book and Wisdom; then comes to you an Apostle, confirming what is with you; do you believe in him and render him help.' God said : 'Do you agree and take this my covenant as binding on you?' They said : 'We agree'. He said : 'Then bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses' (3 : 81). In this verse is a particular reference to the Prophet Muhammed and every prophet, if he happened to be in his time, was bound to believe in him and render him help. Had Khadir been alive, he would certainly have acted according to this verse but he never met Prophet Muhammed which is a

clear proof of his (Khadir's) death and that he was not an Apostle (Fahrashafqa, *Al-Tasawwuf*, pp. 23-25). Then he must be a saint superior to Apostles as he knew what Moses knew not. This contention of the Sufis is not tenable, for the saints are never superior to the Apostles and we have discussed this point, at some length, under Chapter IX.

Here it is enough to quote from Ibn Khaldun (*Muqaddimah*, p. 93). He says : 'They (Sufis) furthermore, speak about the order of existence of the 'saints' who come after the Pole (*qutb*) exactly as the Shiah speak about their 'chiefs' (*abdals*) or saints. They go so far (in the definition of their own chiefs with those of the (Shiah) that when they contrived a chain of transmitters for wearing of the Sufi cloak (*khirqah*) as a basic requirement of the mystic way and practice, they made it go to 'Ali. This points in the same direction and can only (be explained as Shiah influence). Among the men around Muhammed, Ali was not distinguished by any particular practice or way of dressing or by any special condition. Abu Bakr and Umar were the most ascetic and pious people after the Messenger of God. Yet, none of these men was distinguished by the possession of any particular religious practice exclusively peculiar to him. In fact, all the men around Muhammed were models of religion, austerity, asceticism, and pious exertion. This is attested by their way of life and history. Indeed, with the help of these stories, the Shiah try to suggest that Ali is distinguished from other men around Muhammed by being in possession of particular virtues, in conformity with well-known Shiah beliefs'.

The above statement of no less a personality than Ibn Khaldun, the famous historian, lays bare the unreality

of the beliefs of the Shiah and those of the Sufis. Sufis sometimes rely on the following traditions to prove that there is hidden meaning in the Quran :

1. Abu Huraira relates : 'What I have preserved of the Prophet is the two containers, one of which I have disclosed to you and the other, if I were to disclose to you, I am surely to be beheaded'.
2. Abdullah ibn Masud relates : 'The Prophet said: "The Quran is revealed so as to be recited in seven different ways and each of its verses has its exterior and interior"'.

But the contention of Sufis is incorrect as the fear of Abu Huraira that he would be beheaded does not relate to the disclosure of something secret in the Quran or Hadith but it relates to the sayings of the Prophet in which he foretold the destruction of the faith in Islam by rulers such as Yazid ibn Muaviya. This has been specified in *Ramaat* and *Fatuhul-Bari*, Bab, Hifzul-Ilm. Also, it is wrong to contend that each verse of the Quran contains two meanings represented by its exterior and interior, for it is impossible to read two meanings in many of the Quranic verses which relate to the creation by God. The "exterior" of each verse, therefore, refers to its wording, while the "interior" represents its meaning and nothing else.

Chapter VI

MODERNISM

Its Origin and Development

Modernism is not a fresh movement but the same Mutazilism which has its origin in the Qadariyya or Qadrites. The Qadrites are the believers in the freedom of action and responsibility of man. This sect derives its name from *qadr* or power of man over his actions. In contrast with the Jabriyya or Jabrites (Fatalists) it relies entirely on such Quranic verses as these : 'Man can have nothing except what he strives for; and his striving will soon come in light; then will he be rewarded with a reward complete' (53 : 39-41); 'That no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another' (53 : 38); 'over every soul is what it earns' (13 : 33).

'The Jabriyya were absolute predestinarians; man had no part at all in the actions which apparently proceeded from him. This became an heretical position in Islam. The other extreme that man produced his own actions, was that of Qadrites who eventually merged in the Mutazilites' (*Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1961, p. 200).

Their conception of free-will is backed by the thought that God would be a tyrant if He punished man who has no power over his actions. Since God is not so, which is evident from the Quranic verse 'God is no oppressor of (His) servants' (3 : 182), man must be considered as free to act and, thus, responsible for his actions.

This idea was further strengthened on account of the

Umayyads, the despotic monarchs, who perpetrated endless atrocities, slaughtered men of piety and, if questioned, would say that it was all by the decree of God. It gave rise to open discussion and it is narrated by the historians that Ma'bad al-Juhani (d. A.H. 80=A.D. 699) once came to al-Hasan al-Basri (d. A.H. 110=A.D. 728) the greatest sage of his time and asked whether the Umayyads were right in ascribing their acts to God. To this al-Hasan replied : 'The enemies of God lie'. Thereupon the Qadrites thought that it was unfair to believe that man had no power over his actions. Hence the Qadrite movement took a serious turn and grew into Mutazilism. The name Mutazila is again connected with the same outstanding sage, al-Hasan al-Basri.

Al-Shahrastani says that al-Hasan was seated among his pupils when a person came to him and asked what his view was between the two conflicting views; one holding that the committer of a great sin, if he had faith, was not an unbeliever, hence his case is left to the discretion of God, the other laying a great stress upon the threats of God and saying that such a sinner could not be a believer and must go to Hell. Before al-Hasan could reply, one of his pupils Wasil ibn Ata (d. A.H. 131=A.D. 748) broke in and said that such a one was neither a believer nor an unbeliever. With this answer he left his teacher and went to another part of the mosque and started teaching his own views. The name believer, he said, was a term of praise and, as such, could not be applied to a sinner. But the sinner was not unbeliever either, for he adhered to the faith. Thus he was neither a believer nor an unbeliever.

On seeing Wasil teaching his own views al-Hasan said :

grave
sinner

I'tazala anna (he seceded from us), hence this sect was called the 'Mutazila'. Wasil's doctrine was based upon the free-will of man and added to it were the doctrines of the creation of the Quran, the denial of the qualities of God as entities separate from Him.

'Al-Mutazila is the name of the great theological school which created the speculative dogmatics of Islam. According to Masudi (Muruj, VI, 22). The Mutazilites are those who profess the doctrine of *itizal* or the state between belief and unbelief' (*Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1961, p. 421).

The Mutazilites succeeded the Qadrites in holding that man had power over his actions. It is unthinkable, said they, that man should be punished for actions not in his control. They denied as well the qualities (*sifat*) of God on the ground that the acceptance of qualities would amount to the acceptance of separate entities with God whereas He was One. They called themselves as the people of Unity and Justice (*Ahl al-Tawhid wa al-'Adl*). Unity being the nature of God and the Justice consisting in Him, God would always do that which is best (*aslah*) for His creatures. Orthodox Islam holds that no such obligation can be imposed upon God. He is absolutely free to do whatever He likes.

Abu Hudhayl Muhammed al-Allaf (d. A.H. 226) is noted for his more advanced views. He believed in the freedom of man in this world, but in the next world, he thought, all changes would happen by the decree of God and ultimately the changes would come to an end giving place to stillness in which those in heaven had all its joys and in hell all its pains. As to the creation of the world,

Creation

he interprets it in such a manner as to support the Aristotelian thought according to which world is from eternity to eternity. The creation, Abu Hudhayl ascribes to changes; before that world was in eternal rest. To him, tradition cannot be the evidence of knowledge of the Unseen, for it is only a statement of what has been said. On the other hand, there are saints whose words can form the basis of belief in the Unseen. This shows how far he believed in saints who took their rise in neo-Platonism. Further, imitating Aristotle, who denied the existence of God's qualities, Abu Hudhayl tried to cut their number by saying that God's Will was a form of His Knowledge and so on. While Wasil reduced God to a vague Unity, Abu Hudhayl taught that the qualities were not in His essence, but they were His essence as not to be separable from Him. Thus, God was omnipotent by His omnipotence, but it was His essence and not in His essence. Further, he held that nothing positive could be asserted of these qualities, for that would negate His absolute Unity. Orthodox Islam holds that God has qualities, existent, eternal, added to His essence. The followers of Greek philosophy and the Shiites denied this and said that the qualities are His essence.

In the words of Macdonald, Abu Hudhayl was only one in a group of daring and absolutely free-minded speculators who applied to the meaning of the Quran the Greek dialectic, and the results they obtained were of the most fantastically original character. 'Thrown into the wide sea and utter freedom of Greek thought, their ideas had expanded to the bursting point and, more than even a German metaphysician, they had lost touch of the ground

of ordinary life, with its reasonable probabilities, and were swinging loose on a wild hunt after ultimate truth, wielding as their weapons definitions and syllogisms' (*Development of Muslim Theology*, p. 140).

An-Nazzam (d. A.H. 231) made use of the doctrines of the Greek philosophers and held a strange view that God could do nothing, either in this world or in the next, that was not for the good of His creature and, indeed, He had no power to do anything evil. The Quran was no miracle to him.

There are others of this group famous for their strange ideas wherein the influence of Greek philosophy can be clearly traced. Aristotle's idea as world from eternity to eternity and subject to the law of evolution has been upper most in their mind. They did not believe in the vision of God in Paradise as it assigned a particular position and place to God which made him limited while he was unlimited and transcendental. They particularly rely on the Quranic Verse, 'No vision can grasp Him' (6 : 103). To this, theologians reply that gazing upon God is not encompassing Him, nor does it pre-suppose a definite position for Him. A believer, therefore, can see Him as he sees the moon on a full moon night.

We read in the Quran that God settled Himself firmly on the throne (7 : 54). This with other anthropomorphisms of hands and feet and eyes, the Mutazilites explained it (throne) as a particular place which God occupied. But it is not acceptable to the Orthodox Islam, for it amounts to the conception of God as having a body.

The most important of all is the Question whether the Quran is created or uncreated. The Mutazilites hold

Koran's creation

that it is created and base their argument on the Quranic verses: 'We have revealed it on the Night of Power' (97:1); 'We have, no doubt, sent down the Quran; and We will assuredly guard it' (15:9). But the Quran, being the word of God, is eternal with Him. If it is taken to be created it would mean that God is not eternal and this is impossible. Further, it is expressly stated in the Quran itself that the Quran is the 'Wisdom and Knowledge from God' and hence inseparable from God's quality of Knowledge. The quality of Knowledge being eternal and uncreated, Quran too is uncreated and eternal. Besides, God created everything by the word 'Be'. But this word cannot have been created, otherwise a created word would be a creator. Therefore, the Quran is uncreated. All such points are discussed in detail by Ahmad ibn Hanbal in his *Al-Radd ala al-Zanadiqa wa al-Jahmiya* (The Refutation of the Zanadiqa and the Jahmiya). Zanadiqa are the Muslim heretical sects while Jahmiya are the followers of Jahm b. Safwan who played a key role in the early development of Mutazila theology (Seale, *Muslim Theology*, p. 8).

The Orthodoxy vehemently opposed discussion on this subject. Malik ibn Anas strongly held that the Quran was uncreated and always taught to believe all such theological subjects without asking how (*bila kayfa*). Ahmad ibn Hanbal was severely persecuted yet did not accept the creation of Quran.

Mutazilism gathered more strength as the Greek philosophy gained ground. Its translation into Arabic at first started in the reign of the Abbasid Caliph al-Mansur (d. A.H. 158=A.D. 775). His son Mahdi suppressed

free thinking in religious matters which again reared its head in the days of Harun al-Rashid who came under the influence of the Barmecides, the free thinkers, who were his trusted viziers.

Mamun threw all the weight of his influence on the side of the Mutazilites and in A.H. 202, a Royal Decree was issued proclaiming the doctrine of the creation of the Quran as binding upon all Muslims and those who disregarded it were treated as idolaters and deserved penalty of death. This was furiously opposed by the traditionists with Ahmed ibn Hanbal as the spear head and consequently this decree was recalled by al-Mutawakkil (d. A.H. 247=A.D. 861). He issued a rescript placing rationalism under the ban and proclaiming the re-establishment of the old doctrines of the orthodoxy.

Mutazilism was thus suppressed, yet it remained in some form or another as it was spread all over the Muslim Empire. There was al-Jubbai (d. A.H. 303=A.D. 915), a staunch Mutazilite, holding discussions in public that God is constrained to do that which may be the best (*al-aslah*) for His creatures. Again in A.H. 538 we see al-Zamakhshari, the Commentator of the Quran, who adhered to the Mutazilism and preached it.

This shows that Mutazilism did not die out but continued in spite of the fact that it was vehemently opposed by the Asharites and the Traditionists alike. Widespread as it was all over the Muslim World it could not be eradicated root and branch. The Mutazilites were guided by the same Greek Philosophy in their interpretation of the Quran. Reason was to them the real source of knowledge and they turned down all that did not conform to ration- *Reason*

alism. The Modernists, having the same views, are, in no way different from the Mutazilites.

Modernism is generally said to have taken a definite form under the leadership of Shaikh Muhammad Abduh (d. A.D. 1905), who was the Grand Mufti (jurisconsult) of Egypt. But it is not a new movement. Its existence (in the form of Mutazilism) even in the 14th century is proved by Ibn Taymiyya's writings. His Book, *Kitab al-'Aql wa al-Naql* (Reason and Tradition), wherein he exposed the confusion of philosophers, was to combat those who relied upon reason as a real source of knowledge. In his another great work *Kitab al-Radd ala al-Mantiqiyyin* (Refutation of the Logicians), he has proved the falsity of Aristotle's system of logic. Both these books were written in the 14th century A.D. which is a clear proof of the fact that the Mutazilite movement was already there.

After the death of Ibn Taymiyya in A.H. 728=A.D. 1328, his pupil Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah (d. A.H. 751), wrote a book called *Shifa al-Aleel* (Healing for the Ailing) which deals with the points raised by Mutazilites and is a further proof of the fact that this movement was not dead. All this points to the fact that the Mutazilism was called Modernism in its likeness and similarity to the Reform Movement, set on foot in Europe, by Wycliffe (A.D. 1320-1384). According to the historians this movement led to the theological inquiry according to which the Bible and the Doctrines of the Church were examined in the light of modern thought. This mode of inquiry was called 'Modernism' in Europe. And Egypt being under the British rule could not have been impervious to the influence

of such Modernism, hence the Mutazilism came to be known as Modernism in Islam and the Mutazilites, in turn, were called the Modernists. This may be the reason why Modernism in Islam is said to have started in Egypt.

The Modernists have gone to the extreme in their love for reason. Allured by the charm of Western Civilization and its material progress they stand for rationalism in Islam and re-interpretation of the Quran in the light of the modern thought. As in Christianity so in Islam there should be a separation of State from the Church. Their object is to eliminate Islam, its theology and law, from the concept of State. Herein, they say, lies the progress of Muslims the rejuvenation of Islam.

Erastianism

The Modernists believe in Erastianism (i.e., subordination of Church to State) and ignore the fact that in Islam Church and state are one concept; they are indivisible parts of a compact whole. Guided by the Aristotelian Philosophy they attach little importance to God, matter being all with them. What they aim at is material progress and they do not hesitate to use arbitrary and forced interpretations of the Quran and the Sunna whenever it suits their purpose. They even disregard the Quranic injunctions if they run counter to their wishes. All their ideals and arguments are imported from the West. Perhaps they forget that materialism divorced from spirituality is detrimental to society and makes life far more vicious than they could think of. Real happiness consists in obedience to the laws of God which are based upon social justice. It is God and God alone who knows what

is the ultimate good for us : 'And, may be, you hate a thing which is good for you and love a thing which is evil for you' (2 : 216). Reason cannot fathom the reality; for it is only a conjecture and a conjecture can never take the place of Truth (53 : 28).

Chapter VII

SCHOLASTIC THEOLOGY (KALAM)

Al-Asharites

Scholasticism came into Islam in order to oppose the Mutazilites. It deals in logical subtleties to meet their arguments and to give a reason for the faith that is in the Orthodoxy. Those who belong to this school are called *mutakallims* and thus was founded the Scholastic Theology of Islam.

This movement had long been in existence, but was named after al-Ashari who is considered to be the chief figure in giving an impetus to it. Al-Ashari Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Ismail, rose in Mesopotamia and died after A.H. 320. He belonged to a highly orthodox family but, in his early age, came under the influence of al-Jubbai, the Mutazilite, who is said to have married al-Ashari's mother. In consequence, al-Ashari became a staunch adherent of Mutazilism and wrote and spoke on its side till he was forty.

Then a change came over him and mounting the pulpit of the mosque in al-Basra he openly declared that he had ceased to be a Mutazilite. Now, he was an avowed enemy of Mutazilism, met his teacher, al-Jubbai, in public discussions and defeated him with his own weapons till the old man melted away from the scene. Al-Ashari launched a campaign against the rationalism of the Mutazilites whom he cursed for having introduced absurdities into the religion.

In his arguments he first upheld the seven rational

7 qualities

qualities (*sifat 'aqliya*) of God—Life, Knowledge, Power, Will, Hearing, Seeing and Speech. He, then, came under the strong Hanbrite influence and stuck to the opinion that the anthropomorphisms (*i.e.*, the hands of God, His eyes and face etc.) should be taken without asking how and without drawing any comparison (*bela kayfa wala tashbih*). No human form or personality can be attributed to God and this is in harmony with the Quran, 'there is nothing whatever like unto Him' (42 : 11).

From the Asharite system it is quite clear that the earlier Asharites subjected their reason to the Quran and the Traditions, but at a later stage they were no better than the Mutazilites. This is proved by the following example :

In order to preserve the transcendence of God, the Mutazilites denied His omnipresence and immanence, for it would otherwise mean identification of God with His creatures. And they preferred to interpret the Quranic verses expressing the omnipresence and immanence of God in their own way. The later Asharites followed in the footsteps of the Mutazilites while trying to make God's transcendence safe.

Supported by Nizam al-Mulk, the grand vizier of the Suljuqs and under the moral assistance from al-Ghazzali (d. A.H. 505), the Asharite system first rose into prominence in the East and then conquered the West through the efforts of Ibn Tumart, the Mahdi of the Muwahhida (d. A.H. 524). Starting as a Berber student of theology Ibn Tumart declared himself Mahdi or Guided One and brought about the triumph of the Asharite system in the Maghrib.

Further, this movement had the backing of persons of great merit such as Abu Bakr al-Baqillani and al-Juwayni, called Imam al-Haramain. It grew from strength to strength but added enormously to its rationalizing tendency till it was felt that the Asharites were the same as the Mutazilites. And as remarked by Ibn Rushd there was no difference between these two movements.

Al-Maturidites

Here it may be mentioned that al-Maturidi (d. A.H. 333) and al-Tahawi, (d. A.H. 331) belonged to the school of Abu Hanifa who, on account of his broad-mindedness, was suspected of his leanings towards the Murjiites and the Mutazilites. Al-Tahawi was in Egypt while al-Maturidi had been in Samarcand. Of the former no particulars are known, and the latter paled into insignificance before al-Ashari. The Maturidi creed of An-Nasafi (d. A.H. 537) is still used in the Turkish schools, but it differs, in some points, from that of al-Ashari. This has been marked with asterisks in the Appendix.

There is one more creed, called the Sufficiency of the Commonalty in the Science of Scholastic Theology, by Muhammed al-Fadali (died in the first half of the thirteenth century of the Hijra). His tractate on the Divine Unity (*tawhid*), contains the above creed. It is lengthy but deals with the qualities of God and those of the Apostles. We, therefore, deem it expedient to give a short note on it.

It is incumbent, he says, upon every Muslim to know fifty articles of belief (*aqidas*) with their proof, general (*ijmali*) or detailed (*tafsili*). Among these fifty articles twenty are the qualities necessary in God, another

twenty are impossible in Him and one is possible. This makes up forty one. And as regards the Apostles, four qualities are necessary, four impossible and one possible. They are, thus, fifty in all.

The necessary is that the non-existence of which cannot be apprehended by the intellect ('aql), for example, the intellect cannot affirm a body to exist without a certain measure of space (*faragh*). The impossible (*mustahil*) is that the existence of which cannot be apprehended by the intellect ('aql), for example, the intellect cannot affirm the existence of a body bare of motion and rest at the same time. And the possible (*jaiz*) is that the existence of which at one time, and the non-existence at another, the intellect can affirm, for example, the intellect acknowledges the possibility of the truth if someone says that A, has a child, and also the possibility of the truth that A has no child. The possibility means that the intellect can believe in its existence or in its non-existence as well.

The first *quality* necessary in God is existence (*wujud*). All except al-Ashari and his followers hold that existence is the state (*hal*) necessary to the essence so long as the essence abides; and this state has no cause (*illa*). The existence, as such, is inseparable from the essence. Being a state it does not attain to the degree of an entity (*mawjud*) and does not fall to the degree of a non-entity (*ma'dum*), so it is half way between an entity and a non-entity. But al-Ashari and his followers hold that the existence is the self ('ayn) of an entity, and according to their view the existence of God is the self of His essence and not an addition to it externally, and the existence of a created thing is the self of its essence. And, on this view, it is not

clear how existence can be reckoned as a quality, because existence is the self of the essence, and a quality, on the other hand, is something else than the essence.

The proof of the existence of God is the origin (*huduth*) of the world; that is, its existence after non-existence. It is He who brought it into existence, for it could not have come into existence through itself.

The *second* Quality necessary in God is Priority (*qidam*) which means lack of beginning. There was no beginning to His existence. The proof of God's priority is that if He were originated, He would need an originator and His originator would need an originator; there would be an endless chain which is impossible.

The *third* Quality necessary in God is continuance (*baqa*), which means lack of termination of existence. The meaning of God's continuance is that there is no end to His existence. And the proof of continuance is that if it were possible that any lack could be joined to Him, then He would be a thing originated and would need an originator which would again be an endless chain and, therefore, His continuance is established.

The *fourth* Quality necessary in God is difference (*mukhalafa*), for God is different from everything created and cannot be compared to created things. If he could be compared to a created thing, he would be a created thing and this is the proof of His being different from created things.

The *fifth* Quality necessary in God is self-subsistence (*qiyam bin-nafs*). The proof of that He subsists in Himself is that if God had need of a locus (*mahal*) in which He might subsist, He would be a quality as whiteness, for

instance, is a quality.

The sixth Quality in God is Unity (*wahdaniya*). It is unity in essence and qualities and acts in the sense of absence of multiplicity. And the meaning of God's being **One** in His essence is that His essence is not compounded of parts and there is not in existence or in possibility an essence which resembles the essence of God. The meaning of God's oneness in qualities is that He has not two qualities agreeing in name and meaning, like two knowledges or two Wills, for He has only one knowledge and one Will. And the meaning of God's oneness in acts is that no created thing possesses an act, for God is the Creator of the acts of the created things. What comes of you by way of movement of the hand when you strike anybody is by the creation of God. It is said in the Quran 'God created you and what you do' (37 : 96).

Here it is interesting to note that the Jabariyya or Fatalists construed by this verse that man was powerless, while the Mutazilites gave man an initiative power. Al-Ashari struck a middle path. Man cannot create anything; God is the only creator. Nor does man's power produce any effect on his actions at all. God creates in His creature power (*qudra*) and choice (*ikhtiyar*). Then He creates in him his action corresponding to the power and choice thus created. So the action of the creature is created by God as to initiative and as to production; but it is acquired by the creature. Acquisition (*kasb*) here means what corresponds to the creature's power and choice previously created in him by God. In this way al-Ashari places responsibility upon man.

The proof of the unity of God is the existence of the

world. Had there been a partner (*sharik*) in divinity, the result would have been a collision and confusion as it is stated in the Quran : 'If there were therein gods beside God, then verily both (the heavens and the earth) had been disordered' (21 : 22).

Here it is pointed out that Priority; Continuance, Difference from originated things, Self-subsistence and Unity are negative qualities (*sifat salabiya*), for each of them excludes from God what does not befit Him.

The seventh Quality necessary in God is Power (*qudra*) this relates to God's bringing a thing into existence or non-existence. If He wills, He makes it remain in non-existence and if He wills He brings it out into existence. He can make it remain an entity or reduce it to non-entity.

The eighth Quality necessary in God is Will (*irada*) It is the quality which specifies the possible with one of the things possible to it. For example, tallness and shortness are possible to A; then Will specifies him with one,— tallness, say. Power brings tallness out of non-existence into existence. So Will specifies and Power brings out.

The ninth Quality necessary in God is knowledge (*ilm*). It is an eternal quality subsisting in the essence of God Who knows things eternally with complete knowledge and not by way of doubt (*shak*).

The tenth Quality necessary in God is life (*hayat*). The existence of created things is the proof that Knowledge, Power, Will and Life are necessary qualities in God.

The eleventh and twelfth Qualities of God are Hearing (*sam'*) and Seeing (*basar*). These are two qualities subsisting in the essence of God and connected with every entity; that is, by them is revealed every entity but the how (*kayfiya*)

of the connection is unknown to us. The proof of Hearing and Seeing is the saying of God that He is a Hearer and Seer (42 : 11).

The thirteenth Quality of God is speech (*kalam*). It is an eternal quality, subsisting in God's essence. The proof of the necessity of speech in God is His saying : 'And to Moses God spoke direct' (4 : 164).

The fourteenth Quality subsisting in God is Being Powerful (*kawn qadir*). It is a quality subsisting in His essence. It is not power but between it and power is a reciprocal inseparability. When power exists in an essence, the quality called 'Being Powerful' exists in that essence, equally whether that essence is eternal or originated. So, God creates in the essence of A Power actual, and He creates also in it the quality called A's 'Being Powerful'. This quality is called a state (*hal*) and Power is a cause (*illa*) in it in the case of created things. But in the case of God, power is not said to be a cause in His Being Powerful; it is only said that between Power and God's Being Powerful there is a reciprocal inseparability. The Mutazilites hold also the reciprocal inseparability between the power of an originated being and its Being Powerful. But they do not say that the second quality is by the creation of God, only that when God creates Power in an originated being, there proceeds from the power a quality called Being Powerful, without creation.

The fifteenth Quality necessary in God is Being a Willer (*kawn murid*). It is a quality subsisting in His essence.

The same thing applies exactly to Qualities sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth—Being

a knower ('*alim*), a Living One (*hayy*), a Hearer (*sam'i*), a Seer (*basir*), a Speaker (*mutakallim*).

The Qualities—Power, Will, Knowledge, Life, Hearing, Seeing, Speech, are called 'Qualities consisting of Ideas' (*sifat al-maani* or thought qualities as opposed to active qualities). From these are derived the qualities such as God's being Powerful etc. as specified above, while the qualities of action (*sifat al-af'āl*) are comprised in such as Creating (*khalq*), Bringing to life (*ihya*), Sustaining (*razq*), Bringing to death (*imāta*).

The Maturidites added to the 'Qualities consisting of ideas', an Eighth Quality and called it, Making to Be (*takwin*). They add this quality in reference to the Quranic verse : 'Verily, when He intends a thing, His command is, 'Be', and it is' (36 : 82). But the Asharites opposed them and urged that there was no point in adding the quality of Making to 'Be', besides 'Power' already a quality of God.

Now, among the Fifty Articles are twenty which express the opposites of the twenty above and which are impossible in God. They are (1) Non-Existence, the opposite of Existence, (2) Origin (*huduth*), the opposite of Priority, (3) Transitoriness (*fana*), the opposite of Continuance, (4) Resemblance (*mumathala*), the opposite of Difference, (5) Locus (*ihtiyaj ila mahal*), the opposite of Self-subsistence (6) Multiplicity (*ta'addud*), the opposite of Unity, (7) Weakness ('*ajz*), the opposite of Power, (8) Unwillingness (*karaha*), the opposite of Will.

Here it may be noted that it is impossible in God that He should bring into existence anything along with

His unwillingness towards it. His will is there in creating things. Entities are possibilities which God brought into existence by His Will, their existence is not through causation (*ta'lil*) or nature (*tab'*); the difference between the two is that the entity which exists through causation depends upon the cause alone, the movement of the finger, for instance, is the cause of the movement of the ring, when the one exists the second exists, while the entity, which exists by way of nature depends upon a condition and upon the nullifying of a hindrance. So, fire does not burn except on the condition of contact with wood and the nullifying of moisture which is the hindrance of its burning. Fire burns by its nature according to those who hold the doctrine of nature. But the truth is that God creates the Being Burned in the wood when it is in contact with the fire, just as He creates the movement of the ring when the movement of the finger exists. And there is no such thing as causation or nature. So it is impossibility in God that there should be a cause in the world which proceeds from Him without His choice (*ikhtiyar*), or that there should be a course of nature and that the world should exist thereby.

After Unwillingness, the opposite of Will there is (9) Ignorance, the opposite of Knowledge (ignorance of any possible thing is impossible in God, equally whether it is simple, that is, lack of knowledge of a thing; or compound, that is, perception of thing as different from what it really is). And Inattention (*ghafla*) and Neglect (*dhuhul*) are also impossible in God, (10) Death (*mawt*), the opposite of Life, (11) Deafness (*samam*), the opposite of Hearing, (12) Blindness (*ama*), the oppo-

site of Seeing, (13) Dumbness, the opposite of Speech, (14) God's Being Weak (*kawn 'ajiz*), the opposite of His being Powerful, (15) His Being an Unwilling One (*kawn karih*), the opposite of His Being a Willer, (16) His Being an Ignorant One, the opposite of His Being a Knower, (17) His Being a Dead One (*kwan mayyit*) the opposite of His Being a Living One, (18) His Being Deaf (*asamm*), the opposite of His Being a Hearer, (19) His Being Blind (*ama*), the opposite of His Being a Seer, (20) His Being Silent (*abkam*), the opposite of His Being a Speaker.

All these twenty are impossible in God. The forty-first Article is possibility in the case of God. It is incumbent upon every Muslim that he should believe that it is Possible for God to create anything, knowledge for instance, in A and ignorance in B. And the good and bad of things is by Destiny (*qada*) and Decree (*qadar*). But the Mutazilites say that it is incumbent upon God to do that which is best (*aslah*) for the creature.

As to the qualities of the Apostles it is mentioned that they are (1) Veracity (*sidq*), (2) Trustworthiness (*amana*), (3) Conveying (*tabligh*), (4) Intelligence (*fatana*). These four things are necessary in the Apostles in the sense that the lack of them is unthinkable. The opposites of these four are impossible in the Apostles and they are (1) Lying (*kidhb*), (2) Unfaithfulness (*khiyana*), (3) Concealment (*kitman*), (4) Stupidity (*balada*). In this way the articles amount to Forty-Nine, the Fiftieth being the possibility of the occurrence of such fleshly accidents as illness etc. in the Apostles

as do not lead to defect in their lofty rank. This creed of al-Fudali is essentially Asharite.

So far we have dealt with Scholastic Theology (*kalam*) which is also based on reason and reason is disliked by the Traditionist party. In the beginning, Scholasticism gave an impression that it was a weapon against the Mutazilites but at a latter stage it came to be viewed with great suspicion as the rationalising tendency, among the Mutakallims, grew stronger.

We turn, now, to the Zahirite School founded by Daud ibn Ali al-Isfahani better known as Abu Sulayman al-Zahiri (d. A. H. 270). His School is called al-Zahiri (apparent) because he interpreted the Quran and the *Sunna* literally. At the outset, it was a school of law (*fiqh*), but at a later stage it developed into the school of Scholastic Theology (*kalam*). Al-Zahiri had many followers in Spain and of the most distinguished among them was Ibn Hazm, the Spaniard (d. A. H. 456). He was a great debater and famous for his aversion to opinion and analogy. His adherence to the literal meaning of the text (Quran and *sunna*) should have led him to anthropomorphism (*tajsim*), that is, attributing to God human form and personality, but he abhorred this idea and tried to find out some other way of explaining them with some lexicon.

He severely criticizes those who make safe the transcendence of God by saying that He is different in nature, qualities and actions from all created things, yet reason out God's nature and qualities in the human sense. He contends that God is much above and quite different from His creatures, hence His nature and quali-

ties must not be interpreted in terms of human beings. God is described in the Quran as the Most Merciful but His mercy is not the same as is thought of in the human sense. Mercy in the human sense is without the tinge of torture but God tortures children with all the painful diseases. So, we have no right to take the qualities and nature of God in the human sense.

The Doctrine of the names of God is most original point in his system. The names of God, says he, should not be taken as descriptive of His qualities. These names are limited to ninety-nine as spoken of by the Prophet. No more names should be formed, nor anything more be added to their meaning. They are to be taken at their face value and as He called Himself without any addition (Muhalla, *Kitab al-Ayman*, vol. 8). If these names are regarded as expressive of His qualities it amounts to involving multiplicity in God's nature.

Here we find a great difference between the Mutazilites who tried to limit the qualities of God as much as possible and the Asharites who largely increased them and had drawn a sketch of His nature in great detail. Surprisingly, it is the same reason which has led these parties to opposite directions.

Chapter VIII

AL-GHAZZALI AND HIS WORK

Life of al-Ghazzali

Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazzali (A.H. 450-505=A.D. 1058-1111) was born at Tus in the Province of Khurasan in Persia. He received an orthodox *sunni* education at Nishapur and came under the influence of al-Juwayni called Imam al-Haram who taught him Shafite jurisprudence and Scholastic Theology of Asharites. As the most distinguished pupil of the said Imam he started serving under him as his assistant and remained with him till he died (A.H. 478=A.D. 1085). He left Nishapur at the age of 20 and had no equal in the field of learning as his studies embraced not only Theology and Law but also Logic, Philosophy, Science and the Doctrines of Sufism. His great merit and intellectual gifts could not remain unnoticed and he was appointed in 484 A.H. a professor at the Nizamiyya Academy of Baghdad which was founded by Nizam al-Mulk, the grand vizier of the Suljuqis. There he had the greatest success as a teacher and consulting lawyer.

Four years later he was struck down by a mysterious disease. His speech became hampered and his digestion failed. No physician could cure him, they all said that the malady was mental and his cure only lay in peace of mind. He quitted Baghdad and took to the life of a wandering ascetic. After years of his wanderings he returned home and set himself to teaching but remained a mystic to the last.

What led him to mysticism was his deep consciousness of the fallibility of sense perception and of intellect as well. He had no faith in the evidence of the senses as he could not perceive the movement of a shadow and still the shadow moved; a star was, admittedly, larger than the earth yet a gold piece covered it. There may be something even behind the mind leading to the falsity of conclusions. He was, thus, in a state of absolute scepticism and his search for truth is very well described in his *al-Munqidh min ad-Dalal* or Rescuer from Error. It is an account of his endeavour to find out the truth.

His Work

When God by His grace, says he, cured him of his disease and he regained the power of thinking, he set before himself the task of using this power to make sure of the guide to the Truth. He looked around him and came to know the various seekers after truth as forming into four groups : (1) The Scholastic theologians who claimed to be the true exponents of religious thought, (2) The Batinites who considered themselves as a party deriving truth from the instruction (*talim*) of the infallible Imam, (3) The Philosophers who regarded themselves as the exponents of logic and rationalism, (4) The Sufis or Mystics who held that they alone could have the knowledge of God through innerlight and ecstasy.

He had already been in touch with all these but now decided to investigate what these groups had achieved, and which of them would lead him to a certainty to which he could hold fast. He, thus, started examining them one by one. And we think it more profitable if his con-

clusions are given in his own words from his *al-Munqidh min ad-Dalal* which has been translated into English by W. M. Watt under the title 'The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazzali', Lahore, Pakistan.

Here are the comments of al-Ghazzali on the four groups and their particular sources of knowledge:

1. *The Science of Scholastic Theology.* Scholastic Theology was the first to be examined by al-Ghazzali. He says : 'I commenced, then, with the Science of Theology (*ilm al-Kalam*) and obtained a thorough grasp of it. I read the books of sound theologians and myself wrote some books on the subject. But it was a science, I found, which, though attaining its own aim, did not attain mine. Its aim was merely to preserve the creed of orthodoxy and to defend it against the deviations of heretics.'

'Now God sent to His servants by the mouth of His messenger, in the Quran and Traditions, a creed which is the truth and whose contents are the basis of man's welfare in both religious and secular affairs. But Satan too sent, in the suggestions of heretics, things contrary to orthodoxy ; men tended to accept his suggestions and almost corrupted the true creed for its adherents. So God brought into being the class of theologians, and moved them to support traditional orthodoxy with the weapon of systematic arguments by laying bare the confused doctrines invented by the heretics at variance with traditional orthodoxy. This is the origin of theology and theologians.'

'In due course a group of theologians performed the task to which God invited them ; they successfully pre-

served orthodoxy, defended the creed received from the Prophetic source and rectified heretical innovations. Nevertheless in so doing they based their arguments on premises which they took from their opponents and which they were compelled to admit by naïve belief (*taqlid*), or the consensus of the community, or bare acceptance of the Quran and Traditions. For the most part their efforts were devoted to making explicit the contradictions of their opponents and criticizing them in respect of all save the logical consequences of what they admitted.'

'This was of little use in case of one who admitted nothing at all save logically necessary truths. Theology was not adequate to my case and was unable to cure the malady of which I complained. It is true that, when theology appeared as a recognized discipline and much effort had been expended in it over a considerable period of time, the theologians, becoming very earnest in their endeavours to defend orthodoxy by the study of what things really are, embarked on a study of substances and accidents with their nature and properties. But, since that was not the aim of their science, they did not deal with the question thoroughly in their thinking and consequently did not arrive at results sufficient to dispel universally the darkness of confusion due to the different views of men. I do not exclude the possibility that for others than myself these results have been sufficient ; indeed, I do not doubt that this has been so far quite a number. But these results were mingled with naïve belief in certain matters which are not included among first principles.'

'My purpose here, however, is to describe my own case, not to disparage those who sought a remedy there-

by, for the healing drugs vary with the disease. How often one sick man's medicine proves to be another's poison!' (*The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazzali*, pp. 27-28).

Thus he was to a great extent, dissatisfied with the Scholastic Theology.

2. *Philosophy.* Having done with Scholastic Theology he started in philosophy. To have a full grasp of this subject he set out in real earnestness to acquire a knowledge of philosophy from books without the help of an instructor. It took about two years to a complete understanding of the philosophers. Thereafter he spent one more year in reflecting on what he had assimilated until he comprehended fully well how far it was deceitful and how far true.

In his study of philosophy he found that there were various schools of philosophers with their sciences divided into different branches, but throughout their numerous schools they suffered from the defect of being infidels and heretics. He divides the philosophers into three groups: the Materialists (*dahriyun*), the Naturalists or Deists (*tabieyun*) and the Theists (*ilahiyun*). He proceeds further and says :

'The first group, the Materialists, are among the earliest philosophers. They deny the Creator and Disposer of the world, Omniscient and Omnipotent, and consider that the world has everlastingly existed just as it is, of itself and without a creator, and that everlastingly animals have come from seed and seed from animals; thus it was and thus it ever will be. These are the *Zandiqah* or irreligious people.'

'The second group, the Naturalists, are a body of

philosophers who have engaged in a manifold researches into the world of nature and the marvels of animals and plants and have expended much effort in the science of dissecting the organs of animals. They see there sufficient of the wonders of God's creation and the inventions of His wisdom to compel them to acknowledge a wise Creator who is aware of the aims and purposes of things. No one can make a careful study of anatomy and wonderful uses of the members and organs without attaining to the necessary knowledge that there is a perfection in the order which the framer gave to the animal frame, and specially to that of man.'

'Yet these philosophers, immersed in their researches into nature, take the view that the equal balance of the temperament has great influence in constituting the powers of animals. They hold that even the intellectual power in man is dependent on the temperament, so that as the temperament is corrupted intellect also is corrupted and ceases to exist. Further, when a thing ceases to exist, it is unthinkable in their opinion that the non-existent should return to existence. Thus it is their view that the soul dies and does not return to life, and they deny the future life—heaven, hell, resurrection and judgement; there does not remain, they hold, any reward for obedience or any punishment for sin. With the curb removed they give way to a bestial indulgence of their appetites.'

'These are also irreligious for the basis of faith is faith in God and in the Last Day, and these, though believing in God and His attributes, deny the Last Day.'

'The third group, the Theists, are the more modern philosophers and include Socrates, his pupil Plato, and

by, for the healing drugs vary with the disease. How often one sick man's medicine proves to be another's poison!' (*The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazzali*, pp. 27-28).

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'The third group, the Theists, are the more modern philosophers and include Socrates, his pupil Plato, and

the latter's pupil Aristotle. It was Aristotle who systematized logic for them and organized the sciences, securing a higher degree of accuracy and bringing them to maturity.

'The Theists in general attacked the two previous groups, the Materialists and the Naturalists, and exposed their defects so effectively that others were relieved of the task. 'And God relieved the believers of fighting' (33: 25) through their mutual combat. Aristotle, moreover, attacked his predecessors among the Theistic philosophers, especially Plato and Socrates, and went so far in his criticisms that he separated himself from them all. Yet he too retained a residue of their unbelief and heresy from which he did not manage to free himself. We must therefore reckon as unbelievers both these philosophers themselves and their followers among the Islamic philosophers, such as Ibn Sina, al-Farabi and others; in transmitting the philosophy of Aristotle, however, none of the Islamic Philosophers has accomplished anything comparable to the achievements of the two men named. The translations of others are marked by disorder and confusion, which so perplex the understanding of the student that he fails to comprehend; and if a thing is not comprehended how can it be either refuted or accepted?' (*The Faith*, pp. 30-32).

He, then, proceeds to discuss various philosophical sciences, and confines himself mainly to six of them—mathematics, logic, natural science, theology, politics, ethics (*The Faith*, pp. 33-38).

To him, 'mathematics embraces plain geometry and solid geometry. None of its results are connected with religious matters, either to deny or to affirm them.' So

is the case with logic, for 'it is merely a study of the methods of demonstration and of forming syllogisms, of the conditions for the premisses of proofs, of the manner of combining the premisses, of the conditions for sound definition and the manner of ordering it.'

'Natural science or Physics is the investigation of the heavens together with the heavenly bodies, and of what is beneath the heavens, both simple bodies like water, air, earth, fire or composite bodies like animals, plants and minerals, and also the causes of their changes, transformations and combinations. Just as the medical science cannot be rejected so also the natural science is not objectionable provided the nature is considered to be in the hands of God acting of itself but serving as an instrument under His Will, 'Sun, and moon, stars and elements, are in subjection to His Command. There is none of them whose activity is produced by or proceeds from its own essence'.

About Theology or Metaphysics, he says: 'Here, occur most of the errors of the Philosophers. They are unable to satisfy the conditions of proof they lay down in logic, and consequently differ much from one another here. The views of Aristotle, as expounded by al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, are close to those of the Islamic writers. All their errors are comprised under twenty heads, on three of which they must be reckoned infidels and on seventeen heretics. It was to show the falsity of their views on these twenty points I composed 'The Incoherence of the Philosophers' (*Tahafut al falasifh*). The three points in which they differ from all the Muslims are as follows:—

- (a) 'They say that for bodies there is no resurrection; it is bare spirits which are rewarded or punished; and the punishments are spiritual, not bodily. They certainly speak truth in affirming the spiritual ones, since these do exist as well; but they speak falsely in denying the bodily ones and in their pronouncements disbelieve the Divine Law.'
- (b) 'They say that God knows universals but not particulars. This too is plain unbelief. The truth is that 'there does not escape Him the weight of an atom in the heavens or in the earth' (34 : 3).
- (c) 'They say that the world is everlasting, without beginning or end. But no Muslim has adopted any such view on this question.'

'On the further points—their denial of the attributes of God, their doctrine that God knows by His essence, and not by a knowledge which is over and above His essence, and the like—their position approximates to that of the Mutazilites; and the Mutazilites must not be accounted infidels because of such matters. In my book, *The Decisive Criterion for Distinguishing Islam from Heresy*, I have presented the grounds for regarding as corrupt the opinion of those who hastily pronounce a man an infidel if he deviates from their own system of doctrine'. (*The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazzali*, pp. 37-38).

As regards politics, he says that 'all the discussion of the philosophers is based on considerations of worldly and governmental advantage, these they borrow from

the Divine scriptures revealed through the Prophets and from the maxims handed down from the saints of old'.

Concerning 'Ethics', he remarks that 'the discussion of philosophers consists in defining the characteristic and moral constitution of the soul and enumerating the various types of soul and the method of moderating and controlling them. This they borrow from the teaching of the mystics, those men of piety whose chief occupation is to meditate upon God, to oppose the passions and to walk in the way leading to God by withdrawing from worldly pleasure. In their spiritual warfare they have learnt about the virtues and vices of the soul and the defects in its actions, and what they have learnt they have clearly expressed. The philosophers have taken over disquisitions, furtively using this embellishment to sell their rubbishy wares more readily'. Having dealt with Philosophy he turns to the Batinites and their Authoritative Instruction.

3. *Batinites and the 'Authoritative Instruction'*. In examining the creed of the Batinites, he collected their utterances, arranged them in logical order and then arrived at the conclusion that there was no need for an instructor when the traditions of the Prophet Muhammed were there to be followed. Says he :

'The correct procedure is in fact to acknowledge the need for an instructor and the necessity of his being infallible. But our infallible instructor is Muhammed (peace be upon him). They may say, 'He is dead'; but we have reply, 'your instructor is hidden (*ghaib*)'. They may say, 'Our instructor instructed the preachers and spread them widely through the land, and, if they differ

or are puzzled by a difficulty, he expects them to return to him ; but we reply, 'Our instructor instructed the preachers and spread them widely through the land and perfected the instruction, according to the word of God, Most High, 'Today I have perfected your religion for you' (5:5) ; when the instruction has been made perfect, the death of the instructor does no harm, any more than does his being hidden'. (*The Faith*, p. 46).

He adds : 'The astonishing thing is that they squander their lives in searching for the 'instructor' and in boasting that they have found him, yet without learning anything at all from him. They are like a man smeared with filth, who so wearies himself with search for water that when he comes upon it he does not use it but remains smeared with dirt (*The Faith*, p. 53). In the end he arrives at Mysticism.

4. *Mysticism*. When he had finished with the above three groups, he turned to Mysticism (*Sufism*). He was well aware that the mystic way includes both intellectual belief and practical demonstration which consists in getting rid of the obstacles in the self and freeing it from its baser passion and vicious morals, so that heart may be free from what is not God. Thus he started reading the books on mysticism till it became clear to him that what is most important cannot be apprehended by study but only by experience and ecstasy. He says:

'I apprehended clearly that the mystics were men who had real experiences, not men of words, and that I had already progressed as far as was possible by way of intellectual apprehension. What remained for me was not to be attained by oral instruction and study but only

by immediate experience and by walking in the mystic way.

'Now from the sciences I had laboured at and the paths I had traversed in my investigation of the revelational and rational sciences (that is, presumably theology and philosophy), there had come to me a sure faith in God Most High, in prophethood (or revelation), and in the Last Day. These three creedal principles were firmly rooted in my being, not through any carefully argued proofs, but by reason of various causes, coincidences and experiences which are not capable of being stated in detail.

'It had already become clear to me that I had no hope of the bliss of the world to come save through a God-fearing life and the withdrawal of myself from vain desire. It was clear to me too that the key of all this was to sever the attachment of the heart to worldly things by leaving the mansion of deception and returning to that of eternity and to advance towards God, Most High, with all earnestness. It was also clear that this was only to be achieved by turning away from wealth and position and fleeing from all time consuming entanglements'. (*The Faith*, pp. 55-56).

His Mystic Experience

Mark the words 'God fearing life' in the above paragraph which denote that this Sufism did not deviate from the right path, the path of the Prophet. Though there seems to be some element of dislike for the world yet it is not intolerable, for it was only his idea and he did not renounce the world. On the other hand he performed all

the religious duties more sincerely and obediently. As a Sufi he was a good Muslim and believed that revelation was the ultimate source of all knowledge. In his sufi life he was more convinced of the Prophetic light wherein he walked and also died while seeking truth in the traditions of the Prophet.

The last days of his life were completely devoted to the study of traditions of the Prophet. His '*Ihya Ulum al-Din* (The Revival of the Religious Science), represents a thought palatable to the theologians and a theology agreeable to a Sufi. He, no doubt, made a successful attempt to reconcile Sufism with the Orthodox Islam and played a significant part in exposing the evils of Greek Philosophy but after him Sufism again relapsed into the same ecstatic frenzy and extravagances.

'The moral drive with which the Sufi movement had started as a method of self-discipline to realize the religious values of Islam in their fullness, however, soon gave way to and was submerged under the strong flavoured ecstatic impulses and the attraction of a privileged type of knowledge. The orthodox synthetic reform movement that came to a head in al-Ghazzali was a sustained endeavour to curb the ecstatic extravagances of Sufism on the one hand and to limit, if not to exorcise, its cognitive claims on the other. These trends, however, broke loose again soon after al-Ghazzali, and whereas the one developed into a mass spiritual hypnotism in the form of popular orders—especially the 'irregular' ones—the other plunged head long into metaphysical mysteries of all kinds under the iron cover of infallible intuitionism' (F. Rahman, *Islam*, p. 193).

Chapter IX

ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT

Survey of the Sources of Knowledge of the Unseen

'Tolerant Orthodoxy', says the Prophet, 'is the most beloved religion to God' (Ayat, *Ummah*, Vol. I). So we have to tolerate what is not repugnant to the spirit of Islam. But there is always a limit to such toleration and Islam cannot brook compromise in matters relating to Faith which according to Abu Hanifa (d. A.H. 150) is acknowledgement with tongue as well as the heart and that works are a necessary supplement. This is further explained in Chapter X.

Abu Hanifa leaned upon rationalism in Theology and in law and his followers are, therefore, called the upholders of reason. The school of Malik who died in 179 A.H. is essentially the same as it is hard to make a distinction between it and that of Abu Hanifa. As opposed to these is the school of Ahmed ibn Hanbal (d. A.H. 241), who is famous for his staunch adherence to the traditions of the Prophet so much so that even a *daif* tradition (tradition having a weak chain of transmission) was regarded by him as preferable to reason.

There has always been a tension between these two extreme views. The one holding that law and theology should be subject to the overall dictates of the Quran and the *sunna* or Traditions of the Prophet, the other, that it was better to leave untrustworthy and obscure traditions and work out a system based on rules of logic and necessary

the religious duties more sincerely and obediently. As a Sufi he was a good Muslim and believed that revelation was the ultimate source of all knowledge. In his sufi life he was more convinced of the Prophetic light wherein he walked and also died while seeking truth in the traditions of the Prophet.

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sities. It was al-Shafii (d. A.H. 204), who struck a mediating note and held that there should be no room for the free use of reason ; it must have the backing of the text (Quran and the *sunna*). Further, only such traditions be accepted as are authentic and are projected back to the Prophet. The Orthodox Islam is based on this formula, and hence whatever falls within the ambit of this formula may be tolerated in *fiqh* (law).

What holds good in *fiqh* is true of theology except that reason has no significant part to play as Faith is a matter for belief. Hence the text only is the standard of judgement. Anything which does not conform to the text cannot be acceptable to Islam. Now let us have a survey of al-Ghazzali's views.

Of the four groups that al-Ghazzali examined, Batinites could not satisfy him. He was unable to accept their claim of infallible knowledge of Imams, for in this they seemed to challenge the Prophet. He found no help in Scholastic Philosophy as it was based upon reason alone which is the favourite weapon of the philosophers. Philosophy in the Greek tradition as put forward by the Muslim Philosophers such as al-Farabi and Avicenna was offending to the spirit of Islam, for it based its conclusions on non-scriptural premisses worked out by Plato, Aristotle and their successors. So he plunged into Sufism in which he found much to his satisfaction.

The Batinites' claim, as concluded by al-Ghazzali, cannot be accepted, for it undermines the very position of the Prophet. We are, now left to see if Reason and Sufism are acceptable as the sources of knowledge of Divine Reality.

Theology as previously stated deals with God. His nature and attributes, His relation with man and the universe. These are all beyond sense-perception and even intellect fails to fathom their depths. Reason, says Ibn Khaldun (d. A.H. 808), the first philosophical historian, cannot grasp the Nature of God ; cannot weigh His unity nor measure His Qualities. God is unthinkable and we must accept what we are told about Him by His Messengers.

The Greek Philosophy with reason as its sheet anchor has served only to disrupt the spirit of Islam and corrupt its Faith. Philosophy is, in fact, the off-shoot of scepticism and its application to Islam means that Islam is imperfect and there is something doubtful in it, while God has perfected it (5 : 4). No philosophy is comparable to the revelation from God which is the only reliable source of knowledge.

The existence of God is beyond doubt. Descartes (d. A.D. 1650), has established His existence, though he began by doubting the existence of things. To him God is the perfect Being and he, thus, comes into categorical contradiction with Aristotle who denuded God of his Qualities. Hume (d. A.D. 1776), on the other hand, has torn to shreds the Aristotelian theory of causation. His treatise on Human Nature occupies a crucial position in the history of modern philosophy. He undertook to analyse conception of reason which revealed to him that no 'comparison of ideas' can prove a matter of fact, and also that relations between matters of fact are never logical or rational necessary in the strict sense.

It is always possible to assume the contrary of any

matter of fact, and when two facts and events are found to be related as cause and effect, all that can be really known about them is that they do actually occur together with a certain degree of regularity. Apart from the experience of actually finding them together, it would be impossible to infer the one from the other. Hence, the so-called necessary connection between the causes and effects is a fictitious idea.

It is remarkable of al-Ghazzali that, seven hundred years before Hume, he cut the bond of causality with his dialectic and declared that one can know nothing of cause or effect except that one thing follows another.

The premisses upon which the philosophers formulate their lofty theories are mere inferences : if one proposition is true, then another proposition must also be true while nothing, in fact, is known about the truth of the proposition itself. Kant has exposed the emptiness of reason in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. He, therefore, set limit to the knowledge of empirical reality and claimed that nothing can be known outside the world of matter. The arguments about metaphysics, according to Kant, are the wasted intellectual efforts. Reason is an utter failure in procuring the knowledge of God, His Nature and Attributes, freedom of man and immortality of soul, for all such objects are beyond its reach.

Ibn Taymiyyah's *Kitab al-'Aql wa al-Naql* (Book on Reason and Tradition) is full of bitter condemnation of philosophy and he has thoroughly refuted Aristotle's system of logic in his *Al-Radd ala Mantiqiyyin* (Refutation of the Logicians). According to him God is far above His creatures. Our intellect, however developed, is still

limited and thus incapable of grasping the unlimited. Al-Gazzali rejects thought as a means to the knowledge of God for it cannot be trusted as an instrument for unfolding the Divine Mysteries.

That is why the traditionist party was always at logger-heads with the Mutazilites who loved reason. The most prominent figure who led the traditionist group was certainly that of Ahmed ibn Hanbal. He was adamant and unbendable, his piety and courage defeated the plans of the Mutazilites. He despised the Batinites who were tainted with Greek Philosophy ; Scholastic theology (*Kalam*) was his abomination.

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Many others among his contemporaries incurred his displeasure on the same account. This shows his great dislike for Scholastic Theology because of its dependence on reason. Also he was averse to Sufism, while Abu Hanifa is noted for his hostility to Sufis.

matter of fact, and when two facts and events are found to be related as cause and effect, all that can be really known about them is that they do actually occur together with a certain degree of regularity. Apart from the experience of actually finding them together, it would be impossible to infer the one from the other. Hence, the so-called necessary connection between the causes and effects is a fictitious idea.

It is remarkable of al-Ghazzali that, seven hundred years before Hume, he cut the bond of causality with his dialectic and declared that one can know nothing of cause or effect except that one thing follows another.

The premisses upon which the philosophers formulate their lofty theories are mere inferences : if one proposition is true, then another proposition must also be true while nothing, in fact, is known about the truth of the proposition itself. Kant has exposed the emptiness of reason in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. He, therefore, set limit to the knowledge of empirical reality and claimed that nothing can be known outside the world of matter. The arguments about metaphysics, according to Kant, are the wasted intellectual efforts. Reason is an utter failure in procuring the knowledge of God, His Nature and Attributes, freedom of man and immortality of soul, for all such objects are beyond its reach.

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As to Sufism we refer to the two prominent schools which stand out as models for Sufis—the Theory of Unity of Being as formulated by Ibn al-Arabi and Suharwardi's doctrine of Ishraq which we have touched upon in the preceding pages. These could not be reconciled with the Orthodox Islam and a movement started, as a reaction to them, in the leadership of no less a personality than Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi (d. A.H. 1034=A.D. 1624) known as the Renovator of the Second Millennium (Mujaddid-i-Alfi-thani).

According to the Sufi Doctrine of the Unity of Being, God is as Absolute Being and the world merely His reflection, hence no 'otherness' between God and the World. But Shaikh Sirhindi has proved that there is such 'otherness'. His attack on the Doctrine of Unity of Being (*wahdat al-Wujud*) is explained by Faqirul Rahman in his *Letters of Sirhindi* :

'Be that as it may, the chief concern of Shaikh Sirhindi is to bring into focus the moral dualism between God and the World and metaphysics is used as means to this end. The essence of the world is non-being and evil : it cannot be predicated of God. But the world as it actually exists is not pure evil because the reflections of the Divine are also its constitutive element. These reflections, however, are reflections of God and cannot, as such, be predicated of God. The World, therefore, in neither of its aspects can be predicated of God. The error of Ibn al-Arabi and of the majority of the Sufis who followed him consists in (a) not recognizing the fundamental evil in the World and (b) calling it a reflection of God but identifying the reflection with the original. A reflection

or a shadow can only metaphorically be said to be that of which it is a reflection or a shadow. A literal identification is nothing but an intellectual confusion and a religious disaster.

'But why was Shaikh Muhy al-Din led to assert the predication of the reflection of God ? This is because they do not recognize the locus of the reflection (i.e. the external world) except as being that of mental order. They do not allow these reflections even to 'smell' of external existence. They interpret this multiplicity (which they regard only as being) of a mental order as nothing more than a reflection of (and in) the Sole Existing Reality . . . in the external world. What a difference between the two views ! Thus, whether a reflection is to be predicated of the original or not will depend on whether one recognizes or not the external existence of the reflection.

'There must be then 'somewhere' where reflections are cast. Further, there must be something and something dark of it is to be illuminated by the light. This is how Shaikh Ahmed interprets the famous Quranic verse 'God is the light of the heavens and the earth' (24 : 35) which, in the history of Islamic thought, has evoked more divergent and fertile interpretations than perhaps any other. And for 'all is God' (*hama ust*) of the Sufis ; Shaikh Ahmed substitutes 'all (goodness) is or from God' or '*hama uz ust*' (*Letters of Sirhindi*, pp. 41-43).

Sufism as adopted by al-Ghazzali may not be objectionable as it was quite in harmony with the Orthodox Islam. Still it is objected to by persons like Ibn Taymiyyah (d. A.H. 728) and others. Ibn Taymiyyah was scornful of Sufis, for the cult of saints, alive and dead, was

developing alongwith Sufism. The Sufis became anti-nomians and their Theology pantheistic. This was anathematized by Ibn Taymiyyah and he was actually in revolt against them. His claim was to the rights of a *mujtahid* and he went back to the first sources (Quran and the *Sunna*) in everything.

Al-Ghazzali's wandering as an ascetic and his thought of retiring from the world may not appeal to the theologians but his Sufism cannot be pointed out as heresy, for it meant neither infusion in (*hulul*), nor identification (*ittehad*) with God. What he aimed at was to win the pleasure of God by supererogatory service to Him. His Sufi experience made him more conscious of his duties to God as His humble slave and lowly creature. His attempt has been to keep Sufism away from the danger of the Doctrine of Unity of Being.

Strangely enough, Unity of Being forms the main strand of philosophical as well as mystic thought. Philosophers like Plato affirm, on the basis of reason, that God alone exists and the universe in all its multiplicity is either unreal or identical with God, while Sufis in their contemplation see nothing except God. Both these groups come to the same conclusion. The affirmation of the philosophers is called *tauhid-i-ilmi* (unity based on reason), the contemplation of the mystic *tauhid-i-shuhudi* (unity-in-experience).

The mystic experience is stated to be a fact. Those who genuinely experience Unity may be divided into two groups. The first, who are under the intense influence of Divine love and, as such, see nothing but God and even declare themselves as God, as did al-Hallaj. And

secondly those, who struck with the splendour and grandeur of the Almighty God, know their littleness and realize their position of a puny creature and become more dutiful to their Creator.

The first type is best illustrated by Shaikh Sirhindi through an example : 'If someone has fallen in love with the sun and had lost himself completely in its contemplation and worship, he will, in this state, affirm the existence of nothing besides the sun. But even when this man perforce returns to other things than the sun, the consciousness of the sun will always burst out with any experience whatever. He is apt, at the sight of anything, to see that thing as some sort of manifestation or mirror of the sun. The sun can never go out of his mind. The same is true of every lover par excellence (*Letters of Sirhindi*, p. 47).

By losing themselves in God, such type of Sufis lose also their consciousness of self and the world around them. Although they have externally returned to the world, yet they are absorbed in God. He is paramount in their mind. This is the state of intoxication (*sukr*) and they are almost senseless, hence to be excused even if they uttered perfidy (*kufr*) as held by al-Ghazzali and others.

The above example given by Shaikh Sirhindi is based upon his own mystic experience. He had the same experience, which at a later stage proved to be illusory. A fuller statement of the Shaikh Sirhindi clarifies the point : 'This kind of misapprehension, viz. that the mystic, at the time of the non-revelation of the ultimate truth (*asl*), mistakes its adumbration (*zill*) for it, occurs

quite frequently, and so the subject asserts the adumbration to be the last truth. That is why a single type of experience (*maqam*) asserts itself several times (in spiral, as it were, but at each level more adequately). The reason is that each type manifests itself only through its (progressively adequate) adumbrations... If people ask : How can it be ascertained that the last experience is the last and highest level of its manifestation, so that it may be regarded as 'true' ? I answer that the mystic's (new) consciousness of the adumbrative character of earlier experiences is an irrefutable testimony (*Shahid-i-'adl*) of the truth of the last experience (in the series) because this consciousness (of their inadequacy) did not exist when these experiences obtained' (*Letters of Sirhindi*, p. 48).

The idea of adumbrality (*zilliyyat*) is held to be a revolutionary idea and of great importance in the theory of knowledge of God. This is further clarified by an account of his mystic experience which he narrated to his Shaikh, Khwaja Baqi Billah at Delhi (India). It runs :

'I attained to an extreme degree of Wonder (*hairah*). At this point I remembered a passage of (Ibn Arabi's) *Fusus*, which I had heard from my father ; it says, 'If you wish, you may say that it (i.e. the world) is God ; or, if you like, you may say that it is created ; or, if you desire you may say that it is God in one sense and creation in another, or finally, if you prefer, you may speak of wonder (*hairah*), because both are indistinguishable'. This passage made me satisfied in general. Afterwards I went into the presence of the Shaikh and described my condition ; he said, 'As yet your intimate presence before God

(*hudur*) is not pure. Continue with your task until the real Existent (*maujud*) and the phantasmal (*mauhum*) become clearly distinguishable'. I read before him the passage from the *Fusus*, which indicated indistinguishability (of the two). The Shaikh said, 'Shaikh(Ibn al-Arabi) has not described the state of perfect Sufi, although some Sufis have maintained indistinguishability.' (*Letters of Sirhindi*, p. 75).

Shaikh Sirhindi continued until this state of his was substituted by another wherein he could see the distinction between God and the World and his Shaikh told him that it was the state of 'difference after unity' and the end of human efforts (*Letters of Sirhindi*, p. 75).

There are, thus, three stages of the spiritual experience : (1) the stage of *Wujudiyyat* or pantheism when everything appears to be entirely identical with Divine Reality, (2) the stage of *Zilliyyat* or adumbration when the world appears to be shadow or *zill* of Divine Reality and (3) the stage of *abdiyyat* or servitude when the world appears as distinct from Divine Reality. And this is the climax of spiritual experience where man realizes his real position and his actual relation of a servant of God.

Here the Sufi experience of al-Ghazzali coincides with that of Shaikh Sirhindi who regained Orthodoxy through spiritual journey and launched a campaign to bring Sufism back to Orthodoxy. He finds fault with those who despise the world, for 'It is not created in vain' (3 : 191). The light in which both these have walked is the light of the Prophet and no light can be compared to it. Sufis, on the contrary, hold the Saints high

above the Apostles.

There has ever been a conflict between Sufism and Sharia. According to Sufism Islam has two aspects, *zahir* or manifest (form) and *batin* or internal (spirit). While Sharia embodies the outward form, Sufism represents the inner spirit. To Sufis, *tariqat* (mystic path) is the way to salvation. They assert that the Prophet's life also presented these two aspects. By virtue of Sufism he was a saint or *wali* and by virtue of Sharia a *nabi* or promulgator of Sharia. In a state of intoxication (*sukr*) he was with God, while in a state of sobriety (*sahw*) he was with the world of the people. To be with God is more valuable to them, hence they consider the position of a saint higher than that of a *nabi*.

According to the Sufis there is '*alam al-Amr*' (Realm of spirit) and '*alam al-Khalq*' (Realm of created objects), the former being eternal and the latter temporal. To have eternal bliss man must renounce this world of created objects and betake himself to the Realm of Spirit, for to be there is to be with God.

Here again Shaikh Sirhindi comes in direct opposition to them. Unlike other Sufis who consider the world as only a reflection of God and therefore unreal, Shaikh Sirhindi holds it as projected by God's own perfect reflection and therefore perfect and existing externally not only to God's Mind but also to His Being. He, thus, sets a higher value on the Temporal, for it is not only perfect but also the centre of God's attention and nearer to God in its process of being created. And, as such, Sufis are mistaken in lowering its value and taking it to be evil. They are quite opposed to God's will in renouncing it.

The functions of prophets are, therefore, more important as they are conscious of their Lord and His created objects. There is no comparison between the all important functions of prophets and the passive contemplation of saints. While saints are finite, prophets are infinite ; prophets begin where saints leave off. Saintliness consists in the state of self effacement which is definitely a wrong way of life. They try to escape the test and trial of life, while prophets take the test and emerge victorious.

Shaikh Sirhindi lays stress on the spiritual reality of Sharia. *Tariqat* (mystic path) and *haqiqat* (spiritual experience) which constitute saintship are and must be subject to Sharia—the path of the Prophet.

The majority of Sufis of our day, says Shaikh Sirhindi, are not genuine. Their Sufism is based neither on pure reason nor on mystic experience but on imagination (*takhyyul*). They 'simply perform a kind of imaginative gymnastic whereby they think they are concentrating on God but are really indulging in mental abstractions deliberately and artificially'.

Since the mental condition of these so-called Sufis is artificially produced, they cannot be regarded as possessed of a spiritual state (*hal*) ; they do not even know what 'the Station of the heart' (*maqam-i-qalb*) is....Nor do they possess reasoned knowledge ('ilm). It is these who misinterpret the genuine experiences of the real Sufis (*tauhid-i-Shuhudi*) into a popular form of the Unity of Being (*tauhid-i-Wujudi*) and lead people away from the Sharia, that is the moral law into licentious perfidy (*ilhad-u-Zandaqah*)'. (Letters of Sirhindi, p. 44).

Revelation as the Real Source

The salvation, therefore, lies in holding the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet as the sure and unerring guide and the real source of knowledge. This is, indeed, the path of the Prophet and his companions. 'My community' said the Prophet, 'will be split into seventy-three sects and only one of them is saved (from Hell Fire). Asked as to which that sect is, he said : 'That which follows me and my companions'.

Chapter X

TRUE PERSPECTIVE

Faith and its Ingredients

'Thou shalt believe in One God, in His Angels, His revealed Books, His Messengers, the Resurrection after death and His determining of good and evil,' is the saying of the Prophet.

The question is: What is belief ? It is mental assent to or acceptance of a proposition, statement, or fact, as true on the ground of authority or evidence. With regard to religion, it is acceptance of statement as true on the authority of the Prophet and his evidence which is based upon revelation from God. No other proof is equal to such evidence and the knowledge received through this source is established and undoubtedly true. Neither enquiry nor reason nor even contemplation is required to dig out its truth. We must have implicit faith in the veracity of such statement, the statement of the Chosen One who even before his Prophethood had won the title of *Amin* or Trustworthy.

Faith, according to Islam is affirmation with the heart i.e., conviction, acknowledgement with the tongue i.e., confession and works in accordance therewith. This may be illustrated by the Quranic verses : 'O Apostle ! Let not those grieve thee who race each other into unbelief : (whether it be) among those who say 'we believe' with their lips but whose hearts have no faith' (5 : 44) ; 'Say ye' : 'We believe in God, and the revelation given

to us, and to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses, Jesus and that given to (all) Prophets from their Lord' (2 : 36) : 'O ye who believe ! bow down, prostrate yourselves, and adore your Lord ; and do good that ye may prosper' (22 : 77).

The above verses point to the essential requisites of Faith : affirmation with the heart amounting to settled persuasion or conviction, acknowledgement with the tongue amounting to avowal or confession and works in accordance therewith in all sincerity and devotion to God. Faith is made up of these three. Again the verse (22 : 78) clarifies the point that Islam is universal. It is the cult of Abraham perfected through the Prophet Muhammad who is a guide and exemplar for believers so that believers may be exemplars for mankind. And, as such, we must believe in his statement rather than question it or inquire into its truth.

Belief in the Unseen

Belief in the Unseen is prescribed by the Quranic Verse : 'This is the Book, in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear God ; who believe in the Unseen' (2 : 2-3). Further, it is righteousness to believe in the Unseen (*i.e.*, God, and the Last Day), and the Angels, and the Book and the Messengers (2 : 177). The text is clear and does not admit of any interpretation. But still there are some who say that faith is not complete unless the truth is actually known. And this is what makes them search after truth.

Reason, as we have already noticed, proved deficient in finding out the truth. Inner light or *Kashf*, according to Ibn Rushd is not sufficiently general to be

made a basis for theological science. Moreover, it does not yield the correct knowledge, for the experiences of Sufis differ from man to man as we have noticed in the case of al-Ghazzali and Ibn Tufayl. Al-Ghazzali was a theologian and saw in his ecstasy God upon His throne and around Him the things of the heavens, as set forth in the Quran, while Ibn Tufayl was a Philosopher of neo-Platonic and Aristotelian stamp, and saw in his ecstasy the active intellect and its chain of causes reaching down to man and back to itself (Macdonald, *Development of Muslim Theology*, p. 253).

The real source of knowledge is, therefore, Quran and the traditions of the Prophet. The traditions of the Prophet cover what he said or did or simply tolerated if something was said or done in his presence, for it amounts to tacit approval. What the Prophet spoke or did was the Will of God because he did never speak of his own desire save revelation that was revealed (53 : 3-4). The importance of the tradition of the Prophet may be imagined by the fact that we have been commanded to obey God and obey the Messenger (4 : 59) and to take whatever the Messenger gives and abstain from whatever he forbids (59 : 7).

No other source but revelation can play the part of a sure guide, for we cannot comprehend what is beyond our ken. The Unseen is only for God to know : 'They say : 'Why is not a sign sent down to him (Prophet Muhammad) from his Lord.' Say : 'The Unseen is only for God' (10 : 20). This is why Prophet used to say that he knew nothing except what was revealed to him. And has been asked to make this point clear to his followers:

'Say (O Muhammad) : 'I am but a man like yourselves, (but) the inspiration has come to me, that your God is One : Whoever expects to meet his Lord, let him work righteousness, and, in the worship of his Lord, admit no one as partner' (18 : 110).

The verse, while it impresses upon us that the Unseen is only for God, makes it clear that our God is One. The Oneness of God excludes the worshipping of anything else, whether idols or deified men, saints or forces of nature, or self. No sin is as grave as polytheism. All other sins may be forgiven except polytheism : 'God forgiveth not that partners be set up with Him ; but He forgiveth anything else, to whom He pleaseth' (4 : 48) : 'God forgiveth not (the sin of) joining other gods with Him ; but He forgiveth whom He pleaseth other sins than this' (4 : 116).

Partnership is most intolerable to God. None can be His partner : 'He is exalted high above the partners' (7 : 190) and is far above things the unbelievers associate with Him (52 : 43). 'Do they indeed ascribe to Him as partners things that can create nothing but are themselves created !' (7 : 191). And surprise is expressed at the folly of the idolaters, for 'No aid can they (the idols) give them, nor can they aid themselves' (7 : 192).

The Oneness of God has been the subject of different interpretations and on its correct interpretation depends the salvation of man. We give here the various arguments which God uses in regard to His Unity.

He appeals first to the subjective feelings of His creatures and says : 'How can ye reject the faith in God ? —seeing that ye were without life, and He gave you

life : then will He cause you to die, and will again bring you to life and again to Him will ye return' (2 : 28). He then recalls His kindness to them : 'It is He who hath created for you all things that are on earth' (2 : 29); 'Your Guardian—Lord is God, Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and is firmly established on the Throne (of authority) ; He draweth the night as a veil over the day each seeking the other in rapid succession : He created the sun, the moon, and the stars, (all) governed by laws under His command. Is it not His to create and to govern, Blessed be God, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds!' (7 : 54).

Then He draws their attention and say: 'If there were in the heavens and the earth, other gods besides God, there would have been confusion in both' (21 : 22). And, indeed, had there been gods other than God as in the Greek Pantheon they would have quarrelled with each other, making a mess of the whole universe. In the verse (21 : 24), He asks the unbelievers to bring a convincing proof if they have any to the contrary and finding that no such proof can be produced, He says : 'But the God of you all is the One God: there is no god but He: all things He comprehends in His knowledge' (20 : 98).

Now there is a vital issue to be discussed. The lovers of reason contend that men are frequently exhorted in the Quran to reflect, to consider, to speculate about things which means the use of intelligence. But surely these things do not include metaphysics. Only physical and perceptible things from the subject of this exhortation. And this is proved by a host of Quranic verses:

'It is He Who gives life and death, and to Him (is due) the alteration of Night and Day : Will ye not then understand ?' (23 : 80) : It is He Who made the sun to be a shining glory and the moon to be a light of beauty, and measured out stages for her that ye might know the number of years and the count (of time), nowise did God create this but in truth and righteousness. (Thus) doth He explain His signs in detail, for those who understand' (10 : 5); 'verily in the heavens and the earth, are signs for those who believe. And in the creation of yourselves and the fact that animals are scattered (through the earth) are signs for those of assured Faith. And in the alteration of Night and Day, and the fact that God sends down substance from the sky, and revives therewith the earth after its death, and in the change of the winds—are signs for those who are wise' (45 : 3-5) ; 'And He has subjected for you, as from Him, all that is in the heavens and on earth: behold, in that are signs indeed for those who reflect' (45 : 13); 'Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the earth ; in the alteration of the Night and the Day ; in the sailing of the ships through the Ocean for profit of mankind, in the rain which God sends down from the skies, and the life which He gives therewith to an earth that is dead ; in the beasts of all kinds that He scatters through the earth ; in the change of the winds, and the clouds which trail like their slaves between the sky and the earth; (here) indeed are Signs for a people that are wise' (2 : 164).

The above are the Signs taken from the things of every day phenomenon and of utility to man himself which lead him to believe in the Unity of God, for all this cannot be the outcome of blind chance. When we contemplate

the wonder and mystery of the skies with all the countless beautiful stars and laws of order, motion and symmetry we have to admit that there is a Power or Force behind this design. And this Power is God. The unity of design in the diversity of Nature points to the unity of God. Again He appeals to our sense of perception :

'And do they not see that We do drive Rain to parched soil (bare of herbage), and produce therewith crops, providing food for their cattle and themselves? Have they not the vision' (32 : 27) ; 'Do they not look at the camels, how they are created? And at the Sky how it is raised high? And at the mountains how they are fixed firm? And at the earth how it is spread out?' (88 : 17-20); 'Do they not look at the sky above them?—How we have made it and adorned it, and there are no flaws in it?' (50 : 6). He, then, asks us to observe and study again the flawlessness of His work and believe in Him and His Unity : 'He Who created the seven heavens one above another: no want of proportion will thee see in the Creation of (God) Most Gracious. So turn thy vision again : seest thou any flaw? Again turn thy vision a second time : (thy) vision will come back to thee dull and discomfited, in a state worn out' (67 : 3-4). The argument continues: 'Do they see nothing in the government of the heavens and the earth and all that God has created?' (7 : 185). 'Who is it that sustains you (in life) from the sky and from the earth? Or who is it that has, power over hearing and sight? And who is it that brings out the living from the dead and the dead from the living? And who is it that rules and regulates all affairs?' (10 : 31). These are in fact, the signs, the observation of which reveals the secret of Divine Reality

and unfailingly points to the Unity of God.

Thus, He sums up the argument and then refers to His gifts and the consequenses if they are taken away : 'Say: See ye? If God were to make the Night perpetual over you to the Day of Judgment, what god is there other than God who can give you enlightenment? Will ye not then listen?' (28 : 71), 'Say: See ye? If God were to make the Day perpetual over you to the Day of Judgment, what god is there other than God, who can give you a Night in which ye can rest? Will ye not then see?' (28 : 72): 'Say: think ye, if God took away your hearing and your sight, and sealed up your hearts, who—a god other than God—could restore them to you? See how We explain the signs by various (symbols) yet they turn aside' (6 : 46). After this is a warning : 'Say ! He hath power to send calamities on you, from above and below, or to cover you with confusion in party strife, giving you a taste of mutual vengeance—each from the other. See how we explain the signs by various (symbols) that they may understand' (6 : 65).

The argument, thus, draws to a close but not a single verse exhorts us to reflect on the Unseen. They all deal with perceptible things which lead to the belief in the Unseen and prove the Unity of God. Negation of the partnership with God is the main object but Sufis have gone to the extreme in negating the very existence of everything other than God. To them God is all and all is God, which obviates the difference between the Creator and the Creature—a theory diametrically opposed to the Orthodox Islam.

This is the position and so far we have been present-

ing the arguments in the words of God to prove His Unity. Before we proceed to discuss the viewpoint of Sufis we would like to press the point again that we have to know God through His wonderous signs and not try to speculate or reflect upon Him.

Creation

Here is a saying of the Prophet as narrated by Ibn Abbas : 'Reflect on what has been created by God, and do not reflect on God', and according to Abu Dharr : 'Do not reflect on the essence of God, for it will be fatal to you' God's sublime creation and glorious universe admit the existence of God, and the order and Unity of purpose in the Universe serve to explain the Unity of the Creator. They all speak for His Oneness. Why go far, let us make a search of ourselves and we shall have the knowledge of God. Knowledge of one's own self is the key to the knowledge of God. By pondering over one's own existence and how it is brought about, one can achieve the knowledge of Divine Existence and His Attributes.

Man was a non-entity, it is God who brought him into existence. Says the Quran : 'Was he not a drop of sperm emitted (*in lowly form*) ? Then did he become a leech-like clot ; then did (God) make and fashion (him) in due proportion. And of him He made two sexes, male and female' (75 : 37-39) ; All this gives us to understand that there is some Intelligent Being, the All-Powerful Creator, Who does this work and the Creation is not an accidental growth.

Now we take up the Sufi point of view that God is All and All is God and nothing is existent except God. In

this way they wipe out the distinction between the Creator and the Creature. By holding this view they either reduce the position of God to such an extent that He becomes one of His creatures, or enhance the position of His creatures to such a degree that all become one with God. This is, indeed, an insult to God and also amounts to setting up innumerable gods beside God. No sane-thinking mind can accept such doctrine of Unity of Being as it is derogatory to God in the extreme.

We refer again to Sirhindi who fights Sufis with their own weapons. The world, according to them is a reflection of God. Sirhindi accepts it and argues that God being perfect, His reflection must also be perfect and, as such, cannot pale into insignificance. It has its identity and is distinct from God in that it exists externally not only to God's Mind but also to His Being. Besides, there are a number of Quranic verses to prove this reality : 'He created all things and He has full knowledge of all things' (6 : 101) ; 'This is God, your Lord ! there is no god but He, the Creator of all things' (6 : 102), 'Such is God, your Lord, the Creator of all things, there is no god but He ; then how ye are deluded away from the Truth' (40 : 62). The Created, as such cannot be the Creator.

The Universe is not formed by a fortuitous con-course of atoms. It is God, Most High, Who created it. He originates all creation and His creative activity is continuous. He cannot be compared to His creatures ; no similitude of Him can be expressed in human language. He is far higher above His Creation than any, the highest, of His creatures. He does propound to us a similitude from our own and says : 'Do ye have from among

those whom your right hands possess (slaves) partners in the wealth We have bestowed upon you equal with you in respect thereof, so that ye fear them as ye fear each other (that ye ascribe unto Us partners out of that which We created) ? Thus We display the revelations for people who have sense' (30 : 28).

The transcendence of God and His Unity are proved beyond doubt. His immanence consists in His all comprehensive and intimate Knowledge of things. He can not be one with what He has created. He is far above His creatures. There is a clear distinction between Him and His creatures. He it is Who created man, so man is not the same as God. The relation between man and God is that of the Creator and the created ; man and God cannot be identical with each other. And same is the relation between God and the world. The error of the Sufis lies in this that they identify the world with God. This sort of identification is indeed an intellectual confusion which leads to the religious disaster.

As to the Qualities of God there has been a great controversy regarding their number and nature which we have dealt with in the preceding pages. The Mutazilites and the Philosophers, in order to keep God's essence from change, have denuded Him of all His Qualities. But Shaikh Sirhindi asserts the real existence of the Divine Qualities. They are co-eternal with the essence of God and so unique that they cannot be compared to those of His creatures. The traditionist party declined to discuss such things. In this respect Malik's position has been praiseworthy. He used to cut off all such discussions with *Bila Kayfa wala tashbih*, that is, believe

without asking how and without drawing any comparison. There is a Quranic verse : '(God) Most Gracious is firmly established on the throne' (20 : 5), God's *istiwa* (settling Himself firmly upon His throne) he said, is known ; how it is done is not known ; it must be believed ; questions about it are innovation (*bid'a*).

God and all about Him and His Qualities are therefore, to be believed as given in the Book without asking how and without drawing any comparison, for 'there is nothing whatever like unto Him' (42 : 11). Anthropomorphism or ascribing of human form and attributes to God cannot be allowed. Man is after-all a humble creature and hence cannot be likened to God Who is the Creator.

We have also to believe in God's Angels, His revealed Books, His Messengers, the Resurrection after death and His Determining of good and evil as said the Prophet. Angels are the heavenly messengers and the Books are the heavenly messages revealed to the Prophet of Islam and those who preceded him. They are all from God and therefore belief in them is demanded of us. Resurrection and God's determining of good and evil form the essential part of God's plan and, according to the saying of the Prophet, we must believe in these too.

Resurrection

Resurrection after death looked strange to the idolaters who said how can we brought to life or resuscitated when our bones have rotted away and we are reduced to dust. To this God says : 'O mankind ! if ye have a doubt about the Resurrection (consider) that We created you

out of dust, then out of a leech-like clot, then out of a morsel of flesh, partly formed and partly unformed, in order that We manifest (Our Power) to you ; and We cause whom We will to rest in the wombs for an appointed term, then do We bring you out as babes, then (foster you) that ye may reach your age of full strength ; and some of you are called to die, and some are sent back to the feeblest age, so that they know nothing after having known (much). And (further), thou seest the earth barren and lifeless, but when We pour down rain on it, it is stirred (to life), it swells, and it puts forth every kind of beautiful growth in pairs' (22: 5).

This is really a beautiful passage so pregnant in meaning and also convincing. Those who have doubts as to the life after death are asked to turn their attention either to their own nature or to the nature around them. The Creator Who creates for the first time can have the power to create again : 'And this is so because God is Reality: it is He Who gives life to the dead and it is He Who has power over all things' (22 : 6) ; 'And verily the Hour will come : there can be no doubt about it, or about (the fact) that God will raise up all who are in the graves' (22: 7).

All this is possible because there is an assurance of a Hereafter. But man, ungrateful as he is, may reject the idea of coming to life after death. He thinks of God in human sense. There can be no comparison between the creatures who at best have limited powers and the Creator Who is All-Powerful : Why should man, a puny creature compare his powers to those of the Creator : 'Do not man see that it is We Who created him from a sperm ?' yet

behold ! he (stands forth) as an open adversary and makes comparisons for us and forgets his own (origin and) creation : he says 'who can give them life to (dry) bones and decomposed ones (at that) ?' Say, He will give them life Who created them for the first time ! for He is well-versed in every kind of creation ! the same Who produces for you fire out of the green tree, when behold ! Ye kindle therewith (your own fires). Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like thereof ? Yea, indeed ! for He is the Creator Supreme, of skill and knowledge (infinite). Verily, when He intends a thing, His command is, 'Be', and it is. 'So glory to Him in Whose hands is the dominion of all things and to Him ye be all brought back' (36 : 77-83).

The more man understands himself and the things around him, the more he realizes the unlimited powers of God. God the Creator of the heavens and the earth can easily raise up man for the Hereafter. And His creation is not dependent on time, or instruments or conditions. The moment He wills a thing it is there. God is not bound by any laws, His command (*amr*) is enough to bring the things into existence. When He intends a thing He says 'Be' and it is and so it is resurrection. 'The trumpet shall be sounded and from the sepulchres men will rush forth to their Lord' (36 : 52).

The word 'Be' has been interpreted in different ways. This relates to the Creation of the world as remarked by Ghazzali, things do not proceed from God by way of emanation or evolution as philosophers think but are the result of direct production by Him. The world is created by Him in time. It is not from eternity to

eternity as Philosophers hold. The question is whether there was any subject, or something existing, when God said 'Be'. Some hold that there was no subject, God brought things out of nothing, others argue that it is evident from His Command 'Be' that it was addressed to something in existence for the command would be meaningless if there were nothing in existence. How could there be a Command when nothing is existent ! The question now turns upon the nature of a thing (*shay*). To the Mutazilites a thing is a conception that could be known and of which something could be said. Existence is not necessary, for it is only a quality which could be there or not. With such quality the thing is an entity (*mawjud*), without it, a nonentity (*ma'dum*), but still a thing with its substance (*jawhar*) and accident (*arad*), God adds a quality and things enter the sphere of existence. According to another sect of the Mutazilites, existence is a state which implies that the essence is already there even without such state. They all intend to prove the eternity of the matter, the Aristotelian thought that matter is from eternity.

There are Sufis who contend that essences of things are in the mind of God and these are the subjects of His Command. This is but the same neo-Platonism according to which essences of things ('ayan *thabita*) are Divine ideas and therefore real, all else being illusion. The world is thus mere reflection of God and identical with Him. From this it is evident that whereas the Mutazilites try to prove the eternity of the world, the Sufis hold it as identical with God.

Things may be internally the ideas of God but when

they are given existence and as such exist externally, they cannot be identical with God. They are, thus, created by God and, therefore, other than God and distinct from Him. There is bound to be 'otherness' between the Creator and the created and in fact, there is 'otherness', as illustrated by the following example :

A painter conceives the idea of a lion and this is an idea in his mind but when he actually paints it, the lion takes its shape and exists externally on the canvass on which it is painted. Here it cannot be said that the lion on the canvass is identical with the painter. There is a marked difference between the painter and the painting. It may be said that the painting is identical with the original idea. But the idea, if applied to God who is the Perfect Being, when given existence must also be perfect as explained by Shaikh Sirhindi. Thus it is other than God in existing externally to the mind of God and to His Being as well. Even the painting itself, in existing externally to the mind of the painter, is other than his mental image.

The world is thus, other than God and not eternal with Him. It has been created in time and this is completely borne out by the Quran. But the Mutazilites relying on the authority of Aristotle hold it to be eternal. Their definition of a thing (*shay*) as we have noticed above, is an attempt to support the Aristotelian philosophy.

Let us dwell a while upon the philosophy of Aristotle. Matter, he says, is eternal with God. This has been rejected by the Asharites and particularly by al-Baqillani and it is held that God works without any matter. He is not bound by any laws or necessities. He creates and

annihilates atoms and their qualities and by this means brings to pass all the motion and change of the world.

Some grave difficulties arise under this scheme. Apart from the confusion which it may create, it establishes a relationship and tie between God and the Atoms whereas God is far above the created things and quite different from them. In carrying out His plan, He does not depend upon any instruments or means. He creates everything directly and without any intermediary. He is All-Powerful and His power has been admitted even by Aristotle who calls Him Prime Mover.

The theory of Aristotle, which the Mutazilites consider as an infallible truth, is self-contradictory. Aristotle also holds that matter is self-moving and if it is so, where is the need for a Prime Mover ? And such need prove the fact that matter is dependent upon the power of God and counts for nothing if the power of God is not forthcoming. God is thus All-Important and All-Powerful. He is not subject to any power but has power over all things. The theory of Aristotle leads us to this conclusion. And when it is proved that God is All-Important and All-Powerful, the natural corollary is that by using His unlimited power, He could do anything He liked and could create things out of nothing. Hence matter and its eternity is out of question. God can create things and destroy them as suits His Plan. Creation and destruction entirely depend upon His Will, and Plan. Since He can create and destroy things, He can also produce them again. And this is resurrection. It is again a matter for belief and the best course is to believe in what has been revealed without asking how.

Predestination

Last but not least is the problem of God's Determining of good and evil. This has been the most disputed problem in the past and continues to be so in the present. For, if everything is determined or pre-destined by God why should man be held responsible for his acts?

As the discussion on this topic leads men astray the Prophet has warned against such discussion and instructed not to take part in it. But still it is the hotly contested issue, the issue which has given birth to two parties of opposite views. The Jabarites or Fatalists hold that the actions of man are pre-determined by God. Man has no free-will and can do nothing of his free choice, good and evil are all from God. Such being the case, why should man be held responsible for his acts? God, in this way is tyrant and unjust if He punishes man for acts which are not under his power and control. As against this view, there arose a party called Qadrite who said that God is just and is bound to be so. He cannot punish man for such acts as are not in his power. Man has complete power over his actions: he has free will and also free choice and, as such, responsible for his acts.

The views of both these sects have been discussed in the preceding pages. Before we enter into further details, let us try to know, in the light of the Quranic verses, the Scheme of God and how it is carried out.

It cannot be denied that God has power over all things (67 : 1). He created all things and ordered them in due proportions (25 : 2). He also created Death and Life, that He may try which of His creature (men) is best

in deed (67 : 2). Creation, therefore, is not without a purpose. God has created things with a measure (54 : 49) and also created their opposites, for things are known through their opposites. Night has been created to know the importance of Day and *vice versa*. 'Thus, world has been made a glittering show with all sorts of things to test the quality of man': 'That which is on earth We have made but as a glittering show for the earth, in order that We test them—as to which of them is of best conduct' (18 : 7). Evil and good are both created by God as a trial and test for us: 'And We test you by evil and by good by way of trial, to Us must ye return' (21 : 35).

As to the Will of God, 'He doeth what He will' (2 : 253). This is further supported by Quranic verses: 'Thy Lord is doer of what He will' (11 : 107). 'His verily is all creation and Commandment' (7 : 54).

It may be noted that there are two aspects of His Commandment—Commandment relating to Creation (*amr takwini*) and Commandment relating to Right Conduct (*amr tashrii*). Creation includes both what He likes and what He dislikes, for example He created the Devil and Wickedness, while righteousness is His love and approval. Man has to choose for himself, what is liked by God, with the help of the Rules of Right Conduct. Wickedness and sin do not fall under His approval and liking: 'He loveth not mischief' (2 : 205). 'He liketh not ingratitude from His Servants' (39 : 7). And when ingratitude and wickedness transgress their limits punishment becomes inevitable—Even then God's Mercy gives every chance to the wicked to mend themselves and to repent. They are given a definite warning and if they

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still persist in their wickedness, the charge is proved against them and it is at this stage that God's Commandment takes effect : 'When We decide to destroy a township, We send Commandment to its folk who live at ease, and afterwards they commit abomination therein, and so the Word (or doom) hath effect for it, and We destroy it utterly' (17 : 16) ; 'And it was never God's (part) that He should send a folk astray after He had guided them until He had made clear unto them what they should avoid' (9 : 115).

God's Will is expressive of His unlimited power which renders every thing possible for Him. 'He can not be questioned for His Acts but men will be questioned for theirs' (21 : 23). He may forgive whom He pleaseth and punish whom He pleaseth but, at the same time, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful (3 : 129). This shows the tremendous Power which He commands and can use it at His Will and Pleasure but His Mercy gives chances to men so that they may correct themselves. If they fail to do so, it becomes just and fair for God to set seal on their hearts and on their hearing (2 : 7), and give rope to such as do not receive guidance and try them in their contumacy and then mete out a severe punishment for them. All this shows that God is not tyrant.

The Quranic verses which deal with God's severe penalty indicate His Power and Possibility to do anything but the use of such power is not without justice. Although God can deal with His Creatures in whatever manner He likes and is not bound by any law to be just, yet 'not one will He treat with injustice' (18 : 49) ; 'nor shall He suffer to perish the reward of any who do a (single) righteous

deed' (18 : 30). 'He never harms those who serve Him' (3 : 182), 'nor is He unjust' (41 : 46).

From the foregoing it is proved that God is just and deals justly and, as such, His Determining of good and evil cannot be without justice. Further, what is pre-determined is not known to us, so why dispute it and call its fairness in question and why not believe in His Justice and Mercifulness. The best course is, therefore, to have implicit trust in the justness of God and ascribe every Good to Him and Evil to ourselves : 'Whatever good (O man !) happens to thee, is from God ; but whatever evil happens to thee is from thyself' (4 : 79). We have no reason to doubt God's fairness Who takes into consideration even an atom's weight of good and evil and passes His judgement in accordance therewith : 'And whoso doeth good an atom's weight will see it then, and whoso doeth an atom's weight of evil will see it then' (99 : 7-8).

We cannot evaluate our acts. Maybe, we pride ourselves on our works and take them to be the righteous ones but in the judgement of God they are quite reverse. We may be under the impression that our efforts will be rewarded, while we are one of 'those whose efforts have been wasted in this life, but they thought they were acquiring good by their works' (18 : 104). We cannot judge our acts, God alone is the Best Judge.

Coming to the question of the Jabarites we feel that they are unnecessarily obsessed with the idea of determinism. They must always expect good from God, for He does not intend anything evil for His creatures. Even in the severe punishment which He has meted out there is our welfare. To meet the strict claims of justice,

equality is prescribed in cases of murder (2 : 179). Life is taken for a life and in this law of equality, says the Quran, is the saving of life. And, indeed, it saves lives, being a lesson for all. Though the life of the murderer is lost but it brings peace to the society. Likewise hands of the thief are cut off (5 : 41) and in this lies the safety of property and protection of innocent people from crime. All the acts of God are, therefore, a Mercy to mankind and in their own interest.

We do not know what is really good for us and what is evil, 'per chance ye dislike a thing which is good for you and that ye like a thing which is bad for you, but God knoweth and ye know not' (2 : 216). So instead of questioning the predestination, of which we know nothing, it is profitable to beseech God for His guidance and entreat Him to give what is good for us. The Prophet has rightly prescribed *istikhara* (asking good of God) in place of discussion on this topic. God in His bountiful Mercy may grant us, what we ask for. 'Call Me', says He, 'I will answer your prayer' (40 : 60). Further, He has the Power to efface the evil : God doth efface what He will and establishes what He will and with Him is the source of ordinance (13 : 39).

Here the question may arise that God's knowledge of things would be defective if such changes take place. To this we answer that He is All-Powerful and can withhold his Decree of Command which brings destiny into existence.

And it is for this reason that the Prophet laid stress on prayers. 'Pray often and in real earnest', said he, 'for prayers can avert even that which is inevitable

(destiny)'. We have to act upon it, for it is possible that God might have intended for us a better destiny on account of our entreaty and earnest prayer. Thus, His knowledge of things cannot be defective.

The followers of the Prophet asked him once as to what actually predestination meant and whether they should cease to work, for what is predestined is bound to happen. The Prophet, in answer, exhorted them to work and to do righteous deeds and recited the Quranic verse : 'As for him who giveth (in charity) and is dutiful (toward God) and believeth in goodness : surely We will make smooth for him the Path of Bliss. But he who is greedy miser and deemeth himself self-sufficient and disbelieveth in goodness ; surely We will make smooth for him the Path of Misery' (92 : 5-10).

Now we turn to the Qadrites who hold that man has been granted free-will and has power over his actions and therefore responsible to God. They deny that God creates the acts of man and say that if God were to create even the acts of man, then man is saved of responsibility and there can be no punishment.

We read in the Quran, 'God created you and that what ye make' (37 : 96). This has been interpreted to mean that God created man and his actions. But in the light of its context it seems to be irrelevant as it points to the argument of Abraham with the Babylonians who worshipped stone images and idols made by their hands. 'Do you worship', said Abraham, 'your own handicrafts' (37 : 95) ? Whereas God created you and that which ye make (37 : 96). But there is one more Quranic verse : 'Verily everything ! We have created it

by measure' (54 : 49). This shows that God's creation goes by law, proportion and measure. The word 'thing' covers actions also. Nothing happens but according to His plan which is already there. It also gives a clue to the fact that there is Predestination which is further proved by the saying of the Prophet as related by Abdullah ibn Umar : 'Everything is determined even deficiency ('ajz) and efficiency (kays). This indicates that even the actions of man are predetermined.

Every Muslim, therefore, has to believe that it is possible for God to do anything. He has the power to create both good and evil and it is possible for example, to create Islam in A, and unbelief in B, knowledge in one of them and ignorance in the other. Further, it is also essentially required of a Muslim to believe that good and bad of things is by Destiny (*qada*) and Decree (*qadar*).

Destiny and Decree

There is a difference of opinion as to the meaning of destiny and decree. It is said that destiny is the Will of God and decree is God's bringing into existence of the thing in agreement with the Will. For instance, Will of God which is connected eternally with A's becoming a learned man is destiny, and the bringing of knowledge into existence in A, after A's existence, in agreement with the Will is decree. According to another view, the destiny is God's eternal Knowledge and decree is God's bringing things into existence in agreement with His Knowledge. So God's knowing which is connected eternally with A's becoming a learned man after he enters existence is destiny,

and the bringing of knowledge into existence in A, after he enters existence is decree. And according to both those views, destiny (whether held to be Will or Knowledge) is prior (*qadim*) because it relates to the Qualities of God i.e., Will or Knowledge, while decree is originated because it concerns bringing into existence after A's existence as specified above.

It is important to note that God's Knowledge is all comprehensive, and it is wrong to say (as philosophers hold) that His knowledge is confined to 'Universals' and does not cover 'Particulars.' 'He knows what is in the hearts' (4 : 63) 'He knows what ye hide and what ye reveal' (6 : 3). God doth know what every female (womb) doth bear, by how much the wombs fall short (of their time or number) or do exceed. Every single thing is before His Sight, in (due) measure' (13 : 8). This is indicative of the fact that everything is pre-planned and God alone knows the wisdom and secret of His plan.

'With him are the keys of the Unseen, the treasures that none knoweth but He. He knoweth whatever there is on earth and in the sea. Not a leaf doth fall but with His Knowledge: There is not a grain in the darkness (or depths) of the earth, nor any thing fresh and dry (green or withered) but is (inscribed) in a Record Clear' (6 : 59). God knows each and every thing, its actions, movements, its past, present and future. 'I know what ye know not' (2 : 30) are His words spoken to the Angels when they objected to the creation of man as His vicegerent. The question is : How far is man free to act and what is the meaning of free-will ?

Free-will

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah, has discussed this point at great length as a preliminary to the understanding of the question of Predestination and has come to the conclusion that man is responsible for his acts, though his acts are predetermined by God. The only course left for him is to pray to God to show him the right path as given in the Quran (1 : 6), because He alone can lead aright and avert the evil (Ibn Qayyim, *Shifa al-'Alil* or Healing for the Ailing, Cairo, n.d. pp. 78-82).

Ibn Taymiyyah lays emphasis on the Quranic verses : 'Verily this is no less than a Message to all the Worlds : (with profit) to whoever among you wills to go straight : but ye shall not will except as God Wills' (81 : 27-29). These verses denote that the Message of God is full of Wisdom and that it clearly directs man to the Right path. God is the Lord of the Worlds and His guidance is open to all who have the will to go straight (81 : 28). This points to the free-will of man but that free-will is subject to the Will of God : 'But ye shall not will except as God Wills' (81 : 29). This means that man shall have to exercise his will in conformity with the Will of God. Both the extremes, i.e., cast iron Determinism and chaotic Free-will are done away with. Man is neither all-powerful nor absolutely powerless, he holds the intermediate position.

Al-Ghazzali maintains that man is free to choose whatever he likes but God has the Power to dispose or determine what shall happen. Nothing happens without His Will. All that happens in the heavens and the earth proceeds from His Will and Wish.

We find in this connection Quranic verses, relating to the unlimited power of God, such as these : 'It is God Who begins (the process of) creation' (30 : 11) ; 'There is no God but He, the Creator of all things' (6 : 102) ; 'He created all things' and He has full Knowledge of all things' (6 : 101) ; 'God is the Creator of all things' (13 : 18). And things include the acts of man too. Thus it seems that man has no power over his actions, and therefore no responsibility. But there are again verses which hold him responsible for his acts : 'On no soul doth God place a burden greater than it can bear. It gets every good it earns, it suffers every ill that it earns' (2 : 286) ; 'Whoever works righteousness benefits his own self : Whoever works evil, it is against his soul' (41 : 46).

Paradoxical it appears that God should create the acts of man and also hold him responsible for such acts. How can man be responsible for the acts which he has not created ? The Qadrites, therefore, reject the Divine Determination and say that there is neither Destiny nor Decree.

Harmonising Interpretation

The Sufis in their attempt to bring reconciliation between these contradictions, interpret the Quranic verses in a particular manner. Their argument is based upon another Quranic verse which purports that 'Everyone acts according to his own disposition' (17 : 84). They lay stress upon the word 'disposition', and say that essences of things ('ayan) are all the ideas of God which eternally exist with their dispositions, in the mind of God and He creates them in accordance with their dispositions. Thus, they and their actions are related to God in respect

of their creation and in being created according to their disposition they are free, for nothing is imposed upon them.

The Asharites, as already explained, conclude that God has created all acts and man is responsible for acquiring them. According to al-Baqillani, who is prominent among the followers of Ashari, the responsibility of man is due to his act of will. This is unintelligible to Shaikh Sirhindi, for how can a man be held responsible when he has not created his acts. The Shaikh is, therefore, one with Abu Ishaq who holds that human action results from the combination of two powers, the human and the Divine. The Divine power collaborates with human power in the sense that it provides conditions for free human activity. Human actions may, thus, be attributable to Divine Power but not their responsibility, for God is not a co-runner with man, nor can He be substituted for man. Responsibility, is therefore, of man.

According to the Maturidites God is the Creator of all actions of His creatures and to His creatures belong actions of choice (*ikhtiyar*), for which they are rewarded or punished.

These, in short, are the various interpretations to reconcile the apparently conflicting verses. But, in fact, there is no such conflict. We offer our own suggestions.

The interpretation of these verses, if made with reference to their context, removes the whole confusion. We have already thrown some light upon the Plan of God as envisaged by the Quranic verses. It is explained in this way that He created the whole Universe and created man as His *Khalifa* or vicegerent on earth (2 : 30). He,

then, taught man the *nature* of all things (2 : 31) and said to the Angels to bow down to him (2 : 34). The position of man is, thus, far above the Angels. He is the Trustee of God and His vicegerent. The vicegerent must have delegated powers. Man, as such, has been given powers under the Book or Quran and it is enjoined upon him to follow the instructions of God which are contained in it (6 : 106).

Further, man is endowed with the sense of discrimination and the power to choose between right and wrong i.e., free-will (91 : 8) and has been shown the right path (76 : 3) and also the two high ways of virtue and vice (90 : 10). The Quran is, thus, to serve him as a sure guide (2 : 2). There are injunctions which define his powers and he has to act within these powers. His sphere of action or actions, in this sense, is created by God and the freedom of man consists in this that he is free to act within this sphere. The position of man as the vicegerent of God is an irrefutable proof of his responsibility to God. Man has the free-will, but as the vicegerent of God, he has to exercise it in conformity with the Will of his Principal, i.e., God. And such conformity is true Islam.

In the end we have to say that religion is based upon the incontrovertible facts of revelation. The source of religious knowledge is revelation and beyond a certain point, particularly with respect to the Unseen, we must not question nor inquire into its truth but believe and accept it wholeheartedly, for Faith is belief in the Unseen on the authority of what has been revealed to the Prophet of Islam and to all other Prophets who preceded him.

To those who still persist in their so called search

after truth or do not believe in the revelation we present as credentials the veracity of the Prophets who are unanimous in their declaration of Divine Reality, the truthfulness of the Prophet of Islam which had earned for him the title of *Amin* or Trustworthy even before his Prophethood and the living Miracle of the Quran, the like of which not a single chapter could be produced even to this day.

APPENDIX "A"

A short creed by Al-Ashari is given by D. B. Macdonald in his *Development of Muslim Theology*, pp. 293-299 (New York 1965).

Our doctrine which we teach and our religion (*diyana*) which we follow consists in clinging fast to the Book of God and the Usage (*Sunna*) of His Prophet and to that which is handed down from the Companions, their immediate followers (*tabis*) and from the leaders (*imams*) in tradition—with that we take refuge ; and we teach that which Ahmad ibn Hanbal—may God illumine his face, exalt his rank and make great his reward—followed ; and we shun that which is opposed to his doctrine. For he is the excellent leader, the perfect chief, through whom God made plain the truth, when error was made manifest, and showed the path and smote down the innovation, the deviations of the deviators and the doubts of the doubters. So, the mercy of God be upon him for an appointed leader and an instructed chief, and upon all the leaders of the Muslims.

The sum of our doctrine is this, that we believe in God, His Angels, His Books, His Apostles, in all that has come from God, and what trustworthy men (*thiqat*) have reported from the Apostles of God ; we oppose nothing thereof. That God is One God, Single, One, Eternal, beside Him no God exists ; He has taken to

Himself no wife (*sahiba*), nor child (*walad*) ; and that Muhammad is His servant (*'abd*) and His Apostle. That Paradise and Hell are verity and Hour (*as-sā'a*) will come without doubt, and God will arise those that are in the graves. That God has settled Himself (*istiwa*) upon His throne, as He has said, (Q. 20 : 4) ; 'the Rahman has settled Himself upon His throne.' That God has a countenance, as he has said, (Q. 55 : 27) ; 'and the countenance of thy Lord will abide, full of majesty and glory' ; and two hands, as He has said, (Q. 5 : 69) : 'much more ; both His hands are spreaded out', and (Q. 38 : 75) ; 'that which I have created with both My hands ; 'and two eyes, without asking how (*bila kayfa*),' as He has said, (Q. 54:14) 'which swims forth under our eyes ; that whoever thinks that God's name is other than He, is in error.' That God has knowledge (*'ilm*), as He has said, (Q. 35 : 12) ; 'Not one woman becomes pregnant and brings forth, except by His knowledge'. We maintain that God has power (*qudra*), as He has said, (Q. 41 : 14) ; 'and have they not seen that God Who created them is stronger than they ?' We maintain that God has Hearing (*sam'*) and seeing (*basar*); and do not deny it, as do the Mutazilites, Jahmites and Kharijites. We teach that God's Word (*Kalam*) is uncreated, and that He has never created anything except by saying to it, 'Be' ! and it forthwith becomes, as He has said, (Q. 16 : 42). 'Our speech to anything when We willed it was, 'Be' and 'it was'. Nothing exists upon earth, be it good or bad, but that which God wills ; but all things are by God's Will (*Mashya*). No one is able to do anything before God does it, neither is anyone independent of God, nor can he withdraw himself from God's knowledge.

There is no Creator but God. The works ('*amāl*) of creatures are created and predestined by God, as He said (Q. 37 : 94) ; 'and God has created you and what ye do'. Man is able to create nothing ; but they are created, as He has said (Q. 35 : 31) ; 'Is there any Creator except God ?' and (Q. 16 : 17) 'and is He Who created like him who created not ?' and (Q. 52 : 35) ; 'were they created out of nothing, or are they the creators ?' and such passages are many in the Quran. And God maintains the believers in obedience to Him, is gracious unto them, cares for them, reforms them, and guides them aright ; but the unbelievers He leads astray, guides them not aright, vouchsafes them not Faith (*imān*), by His Grace, as the People of error and pride maintain. For should He be gracious unto them and help them aright, then would they be pious, and should He guide them aright, then would they allow themselves to be guided aright, as He said, (Q. 7 : 177) ; 'Whom God guideth aright, he allows himself to be guided aright, and whom He leads astray, they are the losers'. God is able to help the unbelieving aright and to be gracious unto them, so that they shall become believing, but He wills that they shall be unbelieving as is known. For He has made them impervious to all help and sealed their hearts. Good and evil happen according to the Destiny (*qada*) and Decree (*qadar*) of God for good and evil, for the sweet and the bitter. We know that misfortune that befalls us is not in order that we may go astray, and that the good fortune which befalls us is not in order that we may go aright. We have no control over that which is good or hurtful to us, except so far as God Wills. We

flee from our anxieties to God and commit at all times our distress and poverty to Him. We teach that Quran is God's Word, and that it is uncreated, and that whosoever says that is created is an unbeliever (*Kafir*). We believe that God at the Day of Resurrection (*Yawm al-qiyama*) will be visible to the eyes, as the moon is seen upon the night of the full moon ; the believers will see Him, according to traditions which have come down from the Prophet. We teach that while the believers will see Him, the unbelievers will be separated from Him by a wall of division as God has said, (Q. 83 : 15) 'Surely! They will be separated from their Lord, upon that Day', We teach that Moses besought God that he might see Him in this world ; then God revealed Himself to the mountain and turned it into dust and taught Moses thereby that he could not see Him in this world (Q. 7 : 139). We are of the opinion that we may not accuse anyone of unbelief (*Kufr*), who prays towards Mecca, on account of sin committed by him, such as unchastity, theft, wine drinking, as the Kharijites believe, who judge that these thereby become unbelievers. We teach that whoever commits a great sin (*Kabira*), or anything like it, holding it to be allowed, is an unbeliever, since he does not believe in its prohibition. We teach that Islam is a wider idea than Faith (*Imān*), so that not every Islam is Faith. We believe that God turns the hearts upside down, and holds them between two of His fingers, according to the tradition from the Prophet. We believe that God will not leave in Hell any of those who confess His Unity (*muwahid*) and hold fast to the Faith, and that there is no Hell for him whom the Prophet has by his witness ap-

pointed to Paradise. We hope for Paradise for sinners and fear on their account that they will be punished in Hell. We teach that God will release a few out of Hell, on account of Muhammad's intercession (*shafa'a*) after they have been scorched there. We believe in the punishment of the grave. We believe that the Tank (*hawd*) and the Balance are Verities : that the Bridge as-Sirat is a Verity ; and the Arousing (*ba'th*) after death is a Verity ; that God will set up His creatures in a place (*mawqif*) and will hold a reckoning with the Believers. We believe that Faith (*imān*) consists in word (*qawl*) and in work (*'amal*) and that it increases and diminishes. We trust in the sound traditions handed down from the Apostle of God, which trustworthy people (*thiqat*), just man from just man, up to the Apostle have transmitted. We hold by the love of the early Believers (*salaf*), whom God chose to be the companion to the Prophet, and we praise them with the praise with which God praised them, and we carry on their succession. We assert that the Imam succeeding the Apostle of God was Abu Bakr ; that God through him made the Religion (*din*) mighty, and caused him to conquer the Apostates (*murtadds*). The Muslims made him their Imam, just as Muhammad had made him Imam at prayers. Then followed (as legal Imam) Umar ibn al-Khattab, then Uthman ibn 'Affan ; his murderers killed him out of wickedness and enmity ; then Ali ibn Abi Talib. These are the Imams after the Apostle and their Khalifate is that of the Prophetic office (i.e., they are, though not prophets, successors of the Prophet). We bear witness of Paradise for the Ten (*al ash-aratu-l-mubashshara*), to whom the Apostle bore witness

of it, and we carry on the succession of the other Companions of the Prophet and hold ourselves far from that which was in dispute between them. We hold that the four Imams were in the true way, were rightly guided and excellent, so that no one equals them in excellence. We hold as true the tradition which the people of Tradition (*naql*) have established, concerning the descent of God to the lowest heaven (*sama ad-dunya*), and that the Lord will say, 'Is there a suppliant? Is there a seeker for forgiveness?' and the rest of that which they have handed down and established, contrary to that which the mistaken and misled opine. We ground ourselves, in our opposition on the Quran, the sunna of the Prophet, the agreement of the Muslims and what is in accordance therewith, put forth no novelty (*bid'a*) not sanctioned by God, and opine of God nothing that we have not been taught. We teach that God will come on the Day of Resurrection, as He has said, (Q. 89 : 23), 'When the earth shall be turned to dust, and the Lord shall appear and the angels, rank on rank,' and that God is near to His servants, in what way (*Kayfa*) He wills, as He has said, (Q. 50 : 15) ; 'and We are nearer to him than the artery in his neck' ; and (Q. 53 : 8) ; 'Then He approached and came near and was two bows' length distant or even nearer'. To our Religion (*din*) belongs further, that we on Fridays and on festival days pray behind every person, pious and profane—so are the conditions for congregational prayers, as it is handed down from Abd Allah ibn Umar that he prayed behind al-Hajjaj. To our religion belongs the wiping (*msh*) of the inner boots (*Khuffs*) upon a journey and at home, in contradiction to the deniers of

this. We uphold the prayer for peace for the Imams of the Muslims, submission to their office, and maintain the error of those who hold it right to rise against them whenever there may be apparent in them a falling away from right. We are against armed rebellion against them and civil war.

We believe in the appearance of anti-Christ (*ad-Dajjal*) according to the tradition handed down from the Prophet; in the punishment of the grave, and in Munkar and Nakir and in their questions to the buried in their graves. We hold the tradition of the journey to heaven (*miraj*, Q. 17) of Muhammad as true, and declare many of the visions in sleep to be true, and we say that there is an explanation for them. We uphold the alms for the dead of the Muslims and prayer for them, and believe that God will help them therewith. We hold as true that there are enchanters in the world, and enchantment is and exists. We hold as a religious duty the prayer which is held over the dead of those who have prayed toward Mecca, whether they have been believers or godless ; we uphold also their right of testation. We acknowledge that Paradise and Hell are created, and that whoever dies or is killed, dies or is killed at his appointed time (*ajal*) : that the articles of sustenance (*rizq*) from God, with which He sustains His creatures, are permitted (*halal*) and forbidden (*haram*) ; that Satan makes evil suggestions to men, and puts them in doubt, and causes them to be possessed, contrary to that which the Mutazilites and Jahmites maintain, as God said, (Q. 2 : 276) : 'Those who take usury will (at the Resurrection) stand there like one whom Satan causes to be possessed by madness', and (Q. 114 : 4 ff) ; 'I take my

refuge in God, from the evil suggestion from the stealthy one who makes suggestions in the hearts of men, by means of men and jinn'. We affirm that God may distinguish the pious by signs which He manifests through them. Our teaching concerning the little children of the polytheists (*mushriks*) is this, that God will kindle a fire in the other world for them and will say, 'Run in there' ; as the tradition says.¹ We believe that God knows what men do and what they will to do, what happens and that which does not happen. We believe in the obedience of the Imams and in their counsel of the Muslims. We consider right the separation from every inciter to innovation (*bid'a*) and the turning aside from the people of wandering desirs (*ahl al-ahwa*).¹

APPENDIX "B"

Articles of Belief of Najm ad-Din Abu Hafs an-Nasafi as given by D. B. Macdonald in his *Development of Muslim Theology*, pp. 308-315.

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. The Shaykh, the Imam, Najm ad-Din Abu Hafs Umar ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmed an-Nasafi—may God have mercy upon him!—said ;—The People of verity, contradicting the Sceptics (*Sufistiqa*, i.e., Sophists) say that the real natures of things are validly established and the science of them is certain.

Further, that the sources of knowledge for mankind are three : the sound senses, true Narration (*Khabar*), and Reason ('*aql*). As for the senses, they are five : Hearing, Sight, Smell, Taste and Touch, and by each sense you are informed concerning that for which it is appointed. True Narration, again, is of two kinds. The one is Narration handed down along a large number of lines of tradition (*mutawatir*) ; that is, it is established by the tongues of a number of people of whom we cannot imagine that they would agree in a lie. It compels a knowledge which is of necessity (*daruri*), such as the knowledge of departed kings in past times and of distant countries. And the second is Narration by the Apostle (*rasul*) aided by miracle, and it compels deduced knowledge (*istidlali*), and the knowledge established by it resembles in certainty and fixity the knowledge established by necessity.

1. Some will run into the fire and find themselves immediately in Paradise ; these would have been believers. Others will refuse, and will be treated as their parents.

Then as for Reason, it is a cause of knowledge also; and whatever is established by intuition (*badiha*) is of necessity, as the knowledge that everything is greater than its parts ; and whatever is established by inference is acquired knowledge (*iktisabi*), as the existence of fire from the appearance of smoke. And the Inner Light (*ilham*) with the people of verity is not one of the causes of knowledge as to the soundness of anything.

Further, the world in the totality of its parts is a thing originated (*muhdath*), in that it consists of substances ('ayan) and Attributes ('arad). The substances are what exist in themselves, and a substance is either a compound that is body (*jism*), or not compounded like an essence (*jawhar*), namely a division that is not further divided. And the attributes are what do not exist in themselves but have a dependent existence in bodies or essences, such as colours, tastes, conditions (*Kawnis*), odours.

The Originator (*Muhdith*) of the world is God Most High, the One, the Eternal, the Decreeing, the Knowing, the Hearing, the Seeing, the Willing. He is not an attribute, nor a body, nor an essence, nor a thing formed, nor a thing bounded, nor a thing numbered, nor a thing divided, nor a thing compounded, nor a thing limited ; and He is not described by quiddity (*mahiya*), nor by modality (*kayfiya*), and He does not exist in place or time, and there is nothing that resembles Him and nothing that is out of His knowledge and power.

He has qualities (*sifat*) from all eternity (*azali*) existing in His essence. They are not He nor are they any other than He. They are Knowledge and Power and

Life and Strength and Hearing and Seeing and Doing and Creating and Sustaining and Speech (*Kalam*).

And He, whose Majesty is majestic, speaks with a Word (*Kalam*). This Word is a quality from all eternity, not belonging to the genus of letters and sounds, a quality that is incompatible with coming to silence and that has no weakness.

God Most High Speaks with this Word, commanding and prohibiting and narrating. And the Quran is the uncreated Word of God, repeated by our tongues, heard by our ears, written in our copies, preserved in our hearts, yet not simply a transient state (*hal*) in these (i.e., the tongues, ears, etc.). And creating (*takwin*) is a quality of God Most High from all eternity, and it is the creating of the World and of every one of its parts at the time of its becoming existent, and this quality of creating is not the thing created, according to our opinion.* And Willing is a quality of God Most High from all eternity, existing in His essence.

And that there is a Vision (*ruya*) of God Most High allowed by reason and certified by tradition (*naql*). A proof on authority has come down with the affirmation that believers have a Vision of God Most High in Paradise and that He is seen, not in a place or in a direction or by facing or the joining of glances or the placing of a distance between him who sees and God Most High.

And God Most High is the Creator of all actions of His creatures, whether of disbelief or belief, of obedience or of rebellion ; all of them are by the will of God and His sentence and His conclusion and His decreeing.

And to His creatures belong actions of Choice

(*ikhtiyar**) for which they are rewarded or punished, and the good in these is by the good pleasure of God (*ridā*) and the vile in them is not by His good pleasure.*

And the ability to do the action (*istita'a*) goes along with the action and is the essence of the power (*qudra*) by which the action takes place, and this word 'ability' means the soundness of the causes and instrument and limbs. And the validity of the imposition of the task (*taklif*) is based upon this ability and the creature has not a task imposed upon him that is not in his power.

And the pain which is found in one who is beaten as a consequence of being beaten by any man, and the state of being broken in glass as a consequence of its being broken by any man, and such things, all that is created by God, Most High, and the creature has no part in its creation and a slain man is dead because his appointed time (*ajal*) has come ; and death exists in a slain man and is created by God Most High, and the appointed time is one.

And that which is forbidden (*haram*) is still sustenance (*rizq*), and each one receives his own sustenance whether it consists of permitted or of forbidden things ; and let no one imagine that a man shall not eat his sustenance or that another than he shall eat his sustenance.

And God leadeth astray whom He wills and guideth aright whom He wills, and it is not incumbent upon God Most High to do that which may be best (*aslah*) for the creature.

The punishment of the grave for unbelievers and for some rebellious ones of the believers, and the bliss of the

obedient in the grave, and the questioning by Munkar and Nakir are established by proofs of authority. And the Quickenning of the Dead (*ba'th*) is a verity and the Weighing is a verity, and the Book is a verity and the Tank (*hawd*) is a verity, and the Bridge, al-Sirat, is a verity, and the Garden is a verity, and the Fire is a verity and they are both created, existing, continuing; they shall not pass away and their people shall not pass away.

A great sin (*Kabira*) does not exclude the creature who believes from the Belief (*iman*) and does not make him an unbeliever. And God does not forgive him who joins another with Himself but He forgives anything beneath that to whom He wills, of sins small (*saghira*) or great.

And there may be punishment for a small and pardon for a great one, if it be not of the nature of considering lawful what is forbidden, for that is unbelief (*Kufr*). And the intercession (*shafa'a*) of the Apostles and of the excellent on behalf of those who commit great sins is established.

And those believers who commit great sins do not remain eternally in the Fire although they die without repentance.

Belief (*iman*) is assent (*tasdiq*) to that which comes from God and confession (*iqrar*) of it. Then as for Works (*'amāl*), they are acts of obedience and gradually increase of themselves, but belief does not increase and does not diminish. And Belief and Islam are one.* And whenever assent and confession are found in a creature, it is right that he should say, 'I am a believer if God will'.*

The happy one sometimes becomes miserable and the miserable sometimes becomes happy,* and the changing is in happiness and misery, and not in making happy and making miserable for those are both qualities of God Most High, and there is no changing in Him nor in His qualities.

And in the sending of Apostles (*rasuls*) is an advantage and God has sent Apostles of flesh unto flesh with good tidings, warning and explaining to men the things of the world and of faith, of which they have need. And He has aided them with miracles (*mujizat*) which break the order of nature. The first of the prophets (*nabis*) was Adam and the last is Muhammad, upon both of them be Peace ! A statement of their number has been handed down in several traditions, but the more fitting course is that there should be no limiting to a number in naming them ; God Most High has said, 'Of them are those concerning whom We have recited to thee, and of them are those concerning whom We have not recited to thee'. And there is no security in a statement of number against there being entered among them some that are not of them, or of there being excluded from them some that are of them. They all give intelligence concerning God Most High, are veracious and sincere, and the most excellent of the Prophets is Muhammad—Upon him be Peace!

The Angels are servants of God and work according to His commands. They are not described as masculine or feminine.

The God has books which He has revealed to His Prophets, and in them are High commands and His promises.

The Ascension (*miraj*) of the Apostle of God—upon whom be Blessing and Peace, while awake, in the body, to Heaven, then to what place God Most High willed of the Exalted Regions, is a verity.

The Wonders (*Karamat*) of the Saints (*Walis*) are a verity, and a Wonder on the part of a Saint appears by way of a contradiction of the ordinary course of nature, such as passing over a great distance in a short time, and the appearing of meat and drink and clothing at a time of need, and walking upon the water and in the air, and the speech of stones and beasts, and the warding off of an evil that is approaching, and the guarding of him who is anxious from enemies, and other things of the same kind. And such a thing is to be reckoned as an evidentiary miracle (*mujiza*) on behalf of the Apostle followed by the Saint on whose part the wonder appears. For it is evident by it that he is a Saint and he could never be a Saint unless he were right in his religion and worship and in abiding by the message committed to his Apostle.

The most excellent of mankind after the prophets are Abu Bakr, the Very Veracious (*as-Siddiq*), then Umar, the Divider (*al-Faruq*), then Uthman, he of Two Lights (*Dhu-n-Nurayn*), then Ali—the goodwill of God be upon them ! Their Khalifates were in this order, and the Khalifate extended to thirty years ; then, thereafter, came Kings and Princes.

The Muslims cannot do without a leader (*Imam*) who shall occupy himself with the enforcing of their decisions, and in maintaining their boundaries and guarding their frontiers, and equipping their armies, and receiving

their alms, and putting down robberies and thieving and highwaymen, and maintaining the Friday services and the Festivals, and removing quarrels that fall between creatures, and receiving evidence bearing on legal claims, and marrying minors, male and female, and those who have no guardians, and dividing booty. And it is necessary that the leader should be visible, not hidden and expected to appear (*muntazar*), and that he should be of the tribe of Quraysh and not of any other. And he is not assigned exclusively to the sons of Hashim nor to the children of Ali. And it is not a condition that he should be protected by God from sin (*isma*), nor that he should be the most excellent of the people of his time, but it is a condition that he should have administrative ability, should be a good governor and be able to carry out decrees and to guard the restrictive ordinance (*hadds*) of Islam and to protect the wronged against him who wrongs him. And he is not to be deposed from the leadership on account of immorality or tyranny.

Prayer is allowable behind anyone whether pure or a sinner. And we give the salutation of peace to the pure and to the sinner.

And we abstain from the mention of the Companions (*sahibs*) of the Prophet except with good.

And we bear witness that Paradise is for the ten of whom the Prophet—God bless him and give him peace!—gave good tidings of Paradise (*al-asharatu-l-mubashshara*).

And we approve the wiping (*msh*) of the inner shoes (*Khuffs*) both at home and when on journey.

And we do not regard *nabidh* as forbidden.

And the Saint does not reach the level of the Prophets. And the creature does not come to a point where commands and prohibitions and the details of the statutes in their outward sense (*zahir*) fall away from him ; and the turning aside from these to the views which the People of the Inner Meaning (*batin*) assert is a deviation (*ilhad*) through unbelief.

And feeling safe from God is unbelief. And despairing of God unbelief. And the rejection of the statutes and contempt for the laws is unbelief. And believing a diviner (*Kahin*) in what he tells of the unseen (*ghayb*) is unbelief. And what does not exist (*ma'dum*) is known of God Most High just as what exist (*mawjud*) is known of Him and it (i.e., what does not exist) is neither a thing (*shay*) nor an object of vision (*maran*).

And in prayer of the living for the dead, and in alms offered for them there is an advantage to them. And God Most High answers prayers and supplies needs.

And what the Prophet has reported of the conditions of the last day (*as-sā'a*), of the appearance of ad-Dajjal and of the beast of the earth (cf. Revelations XIII, 11 ff.) and of Yajuj and Majuj and the descent of Isa from heaven and the rising of the sun in the West, that is Verity.

And the Mujtahids sometimes err and sometimes hit the mark. And the Apostles of mankind are more excellent than the Apostles of angels : and the Apostles of the angels are more excellent than the generality of mankind ; and the generality of mankind of the true believers is more excellent than the generality of the angels.

APPENDIX "C"

A short creed by Al-Ghazzali as given by D. B. Macdonald in his *Development of Muslim Theology*, pp. 300-307.

We say—and in God is our trust—Praise belongeth unto God, the Beginner, the Bringer back, the Doer of what He willeth, the Lord of the Glorious Throne and of Mighty Grasp, the Guider of His chosen creatures to the right path and to the true way, the Granter of benefits to them after the witness to the Unity (*tawheed*) by guarding their articles of belief from obscurities of doubt and opposition, He that bringeth them to follow His Apostle, the Chosen one (*al-Mustafa*), and to imitate the traces of his Companions, the most honoured, through His aid and right guidance revealed to them in His essence and His works by His beautiful qualities which none perceives, save he who inclines his ear. He is the witness who maketh known to them that He in His essence is One without any partner (*sharik*), Single without any similar, Eternal without any opposite, Separate without any like. He is One Prior (*qadim*) with nothing before Him, from eternity (*azali*) without any beginning, abiding in existence with none after Him, to eternity (*abadi*) without any end, subsisting without ending, abiding without termination. He hath not ceased and He will not cease to be described with glorious epithets; finishing and ending, through cutting off of the ages and the terminating of allotted times, have no rule over Him,

but He is the First and Last, the External and the Internal, and He knoweth everything.

We witness that He is not a body possessing form, nor a substance possessing bounds and limits. He does not resemble bodies, either in limitation or in accepting division. He is not a substance and substances do not exist in Him; and He is not an accident and accidents do not exist in Him, nay He does not resemble an entity and no entity resembles Him; nothing like Him and He is not like anything; measure does not bound Him and boundaries do not contain Him; the directions do not surround Him and neither the earth nor the heavens are on different sides of Him: Lo, He is seated firmly upon His Throne ('arsh), after the manner which He has said, and in the sense in which He willed being seated firmly (*istiwa*), which is far removed from contact and fixity of location and being established and being enveloped and being removed. The throne does not carry Him, but those that carry it are carried by the grace of His power and mastered by His grasp. He is above the Throne and the Heavens and above every thing unto the limit of the Pleiades, with an aboveness which does not bring Him nearer to the Throne and the Heavens, just as it does not make Him further from the earth and the Pleiades. Nay, He is exalted by degrees from the Throne and Heavens, just as He is exalted by degrees from the earth and the Pleiades; and He, in spite of that, is near to every entity and is 'nearer to a creature than the artery of his neck' (Q. 50 : 15), and He witnesseth everything, since His nearness does not resemble the nearness of bodies, just as His essence does not resemble the essence of bodies. He

does not exist in anything, just as nothing exists in Him. He has exalted Himself far therefrom that a place should contain Him, just as He has sanctified Himself far there from that time should limit Him. Nay, He was before He had created time and place and He is now above that which He was above, and distinct from His creatures through His qualities. There is not in His essence His equal, nor in His equal His essence. He is far removed from change of state or of place. Events have no place in Him, and mishaps do not befall Him. Nay, He does not cease, through His glorious epithets, to be far removed from changing, and through His perfect qualities to be independent of perfecting increase. The existence of His essence is known by reason ; His essence is seen with the eyes, a benefit from Him and a grace to the pious, in Abiding Abode and a completion in beatitude from Him, through gazing upon His gracious face.

We witness that He is living, powerful, commanding, conquering, inadequacy and weakness befall Him not; slumber seizes Him not, nor sleep. Passing away does not happen to Him, nor death. He is Lord of the visible and the invisible, that of Force and that of Might ; He possesses Rule and Creation and Command ; the heavens are rolled in His right hand and the created things are overcome in His grasp : He is separate in creating and in inventing ; He is one in bringing into existence and innovating. He created the creation and their works and decreed their sustenance and their terms of life not a decreed thing escapes His grasp and the mutations of things are not distant from His power ; the things which He hath decreed can

not be reckoned and things which He knoweth have no end.

We witness that He knoweth all the things that can be known, comprehending that which happeneth from the bounds of the earth unto the topmost heavens ; no grain in the earth or the heavens is distant from His Knowledge. Yea, He knows the creeping of the balk ant upon the rugged rock in a dark night, and He perceives the movement of the mote in the midst of the air ; He knows the secret and the concealed and has knowledge of the suggestions of the minds and the movements of the thoughts and the concealed things of the inmost parts, by a knowledge which is prior from eternity ; He has not ceased to be describable by it, from the ages of the ages, not by a knowledge which reviews itself and arises in His essence by arrival and removal.

We witness that He is a Willer of the things that are, a Director of the things that happen ; there does not come about in the world, seen or unseen, little or much, small or great, good or evil, advantage or loss, increase or diminution, obedience or rebellion, except by His will. What He wills is, and what He wills not is not. Not a glance of one who looks, or a slip of one who thinks is outside His will ; He is the Creator, the Bringer back, the Doer of that which He wills. There is no opponent of His command and no repeller of His destiny and no refuge for a creature from disobeying Him, and no strength to a creature to obey Him except by His Will. Even though mankind and the Jinn and the Angels and the Shaytans were to unite to remove a single grain in the world or to bring it

to rest without His Will, they would be too weak for that. His Will subsists in His essence as one of His qualities ; He hath not ceased to be described through it as a Willer, in His Infinity, of the existence of things at their appointed times which He hath decreed. So they come into existence at their appointed times even as He has willed in His Infinity without precedence or sequence. They happen according to the agreement of His Knowledge and His Will, without exchange or change in planning of things, nor with arranging of thoughts or a waiting of time, and therefore one thing does not distract Him from another.

And we witness that He is a Hearer and a Seer. He hears and sees, and no audible thing is distant from His hearing and no visible thing is far from His seeing, however fine it may be. Distance does not curtain off His hearing and darkness not dull His seeing ; He sees without eyeball or eyelid, and hears without earholes or ears, just as He knows without a brain and seizes without a limb and creates without an instrument, since His qualities do not resemble the qualities of created things, just His essence does not resemble the essences of created things.

And we witness that He speaks, commanding, forbidding, praising, threatening, with a speech from all eternity, prior, subsisting in His essence not resembling the speech of created things. It is not a sound which originates through the slipping out of air, or striking of bodies, nor is it a letter which is separated off by closing down lip or moving a tongue. And the Quran and Tawrat (the law of Moses) and the Injil (the Gospel) and the

Zabbur (the Psalms) are His books revealed to His Apostles. And the Quran is repeated by tongues, written in copies, preserved in hearts : yet it, in spite of that, is prior, subsisting in the essence of God, not subject to division and separation through being transferred to hearts and leaves. And Musa heard the speech of God without a sound and without a letter, just as the pious see the essence of God, in the other world, without a substance or an attribute.

And since He has those qualities, He is Living, Knowing, Powerful, a Willer, a Hearer, a Seer, a Speaker, through Life, Power, Knowledge, Will, Hearing, Seeing, Speech, not by a thing separated from His essence.

We witness that there is no entity besides Him, except what is originated from His actions and proceeds from His justice, after the most beautiful and perfect and complete and just of ways. He is wise in His actions, just in His determinations ; there is no analogy between His justice and the justice of creatures, since tyranny is conceivable in the case of a creature, when he deals with the property of some other than himself, but tyranny is not conceivable in the case of God. For He never encounters any property in another besides Himself, so that His dealing with it might be tyranny. Everything besides Him, consisting of man and Jinn and Angels and Shaytans and the heavens and the earth and animals and plants and inanimate things and substance and attribute and things perceived and things felt, is an originated thing, which He created by His power, before any other had created it, after it had not existed, and which he invented after that it had not been a thing, since He in eternity was an entity by Himself, and there was not along with Him any other

than He. So He originated the creation thereafter, by way of manifestation of His power, and verification of that which had preceded of His Will, and of that which existed in eternity of His Word; not because He had lack of it or need of it. And He is gracious in creating and in making for the first time and in imposing of duty—not of necessity—and He is generous in benefiting; and well-doing and gracious helping belong to Him, since He is able to bring upon His creatures different kinds of punishment and to test them with different varieties of pains and ailments. And if He did that, it would be justice on His part, and would not be a vile action or tyranny in Him. He rewardeth His believing creatures for their acts of obedience by a decision which is of generosity and of promise and not of right and of obligation, since no particular action towards anyone is incumbent upon Him, and tyranny is inconceivable in Him, and no one possesses a right against Him. And His right to acts of obedience is binding upon the creatures because He has made it binding through the tongues of His prophets, not by reason alone. But He sent Apostles, and manifested their truth by plain miracles, and they brought His commands and forbiddings and promisings and threatenings. So, belief in them as to what they have brought is incumbent upon the creation.

The Second Word of Witnessing is witnessing that the apostolate belongs to the Apostle, and that God sent the unlettered Qurayshite prophet, Muhammad, with his apostolate to the totality of Arabs and foreigners and Jinn and men. And He abrogated by his law the other laws, except so much of them as He confirmed; and made him excellent over the rest of the prophets and made him the

Lord of Mankind and declared incomplete the Faith that consists in witnessing the Unity, which is saying, 'There is no god except God' so long as there is not joined to that a witnessing to the Apostle, which is saying, 'Muhammad is the Apostle of God. And He made obligatory upon the creation belief in him, as to all which he narrated concerning the things of this world and the next, and that He would not accept the faith of a creature, so long as he did not believe in that which the Prophet narrated concerning things after death. The first of that is the question of Munkar and Nakir; these are two awful and terrible beings who will cause the creature to sit up in his grave, complete both soul and body; and they will ask him, 'who is thy Lord, and what is thy religion (*din*), and who is thy Prophet?' They are the two testers in the grave and their questioning is the first testing after death. And that he should believe in the punishing of the grave—that it is a verity and that its judgement upon the body and the soul is just, according to what God wills. And that he should believe in the Balance—it is with the two scales and the tongue, the magnitude of which is like unto the stages of the heavens and the earth. In it deeds are weighed by the power of God, Most High, and its weights in that day will be of the weight of motes and mustard seeds, to show the exactitude of its justice. The leaves of the good deeds will be placed in a beautiful form in the scale of light; and then the Balance will be weighed down by them according to the measures of their degree with God, by the grace of God. And the leaves of evil deeds will be cast in a vile form into the scale of darkness, and the Balance will be light with them, through the justice of God. And that he should

believe that the Bridge (*al-Sirat*) is a Verity ; it is a bridge stretched over the back of Hell (*jahannam*), sharper than a sword and finer than a hair. The feet of the unbelievers slip upon it, by the decree of God, and fall with them into the Fire. But the feet of the believers stand firm upon it, by the grace of God, and so they pass into the Abiding Abode. And that he should believe in the Tank (*hawd*), to which the people shall go down, the Tank of Muhammad from which the believers shall drink before entering the Garden and after passing the Bridge. Whoever drinks of it a single draught will never thirst again thereafter. Its breadth is a journey of a month ; its water is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey ; around it are ewers in numbers like the stars of heaven ; into it flow two canals from *al-Kawthar* (Q. 108). And that he should believe in the Reckoning and in the distinctions between men in it, him with whom it will go hard in the Reckoning and him to whom compassion will be shown therein, and him who enters the Garden without any reckoning,—these are the honoured (*muqarrab*). God Most High will ask whomsoever He will of the prophets, concerning the carrying of His message, and whomsoever He will of the unbelievers, concerning the rejection of the messengers ; and He will ask the innovators (*mubtadis*) concerning the Sunna ; and the Muslims concerning works. And that he should believe that the attestors of God's unity (*muwahhids*) will be brought forth from the Fire, after vengeance has been taken on them, so that there will not remain in Hell an attestor of God's Unity. And that he should believe in the intercession (*shafa'a*) of the prophets, next of the learned (*ulama*), next of the Martyrs, next of the rest of the believers—each

according to his dignity and rank with God Most High. And he who remains of the believers, and has no intercessor, shall be brought forth of the grace of God, whose are Might and Majesty. So there shall not abide eternally in the Fire a single believer, but whoever has in his heart the weight of a single grain of faith shall be brought forth therefrom. And that he should confess the excellence of the Companions—May God be well pleased with them ! and their rank ; and that the most excellent of mankind, after the Prophet, is Abu Bakr, next Umar, next Uthman, next Ali—May God be well pleased with them ! And that he should think well of all the Companions and should praise them as God, whose are Might and Majesty, has praised them and His Apostles. All this is of that which handed in traditions from the Prophet and in narratives from the followers. He who confesses all this, relying upon it, is of the people of the Truth and the Company of the Sunna, and hath separated himself from the band of error and the sect of innovation (*bid'a*). So we ask from God perfection, certainty and firm standing in the Faith (*din*) for us and for all Muslims through His companions —Lo ! He is the Most Compassionate !—and may the blessing of God be upon our Lord Muhammad and upon every chosen creature.

Fadl and Faidi whose influence on Akbar was one of the great contributory factors to the crisis of orthodox Islam at the court.

He is better known as the Renovator of the Millennium (Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani). His was the life of storm and stress as has generally been the case with great religious leaders. His bold criticism of the Moghal Emperors and their irreligious character resulted in his 'detention' (*nazarbandi*) and 'internment' (*habs*) ; his health failed and finally he died at Sirhind on 28-2-1034 A.H. (10 December ; 1624).

Brief sketch of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's life as given by Fazlur Rehman in his *Selected Letters of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi*, p. 73 (Karachi 1968).

Shaikh Ahmad Badr al-Din Abul Barakat al-Faruqi was born on 14 Shawwal, 971 A.H. (1563 A.C.) at Sirhind (in East Panjab), a town which was built by the order of Firoz Shah Taghlaq to facilitate the shipments of revenue to Delhi. His father, 'Abd al-Ahad, was a spiritual disciple of the famous Qadiri Sufi, 'Abd al-Quddus Gangohi and his son Rukn al-Din. Before his affiliation to the Naqshbandi order, Shaikh Ahmad was in Chisti and Qadiri traditions. He began his education by memorising the Quran. After this he started his studies with his father, and a little later completed his courses in Kalam, Philosophy, Hadith, etc. ; successively under Kamal Kashmiri. He then began to teach at Agra, then Capital of India, and also to write a number of treatises and commentaries on Sufi doctrine and *Kalam*. Among these early treatises the most important are *Ma'arif Ladunya* (Sufism and *Kalam*), *Risala Tahliliya* and *Risala fi ithbat al-nubuwwah*. In his Sufi thought he expounded the doctrine of the Unity of Being on which he also wrote some poetry as he confesses later in his *Maktubat*. The latter two treatises were reactions against the Shia influence generally and especially at the court and against the philosophical scepticism of the two brothers Abul-

Ahmad, in pursuance of his concept of *asl-zill*, affirms the real existence of the Divine Attributes : these are not merely conceptually distinguishable from God's Essence, as the philosophers and the Mutazilah assert, but are actually and 'externally' distinguishable. These are co-eternal with the Essence of God, and like His Essence, are not intrinsically knowable (*bi-chigun*). In themselves they are so unique that their comparison (*munasabat*) with the attributes of the creatures is unconceivable. All the Divine attributes are eternal, atomic and changeless. Let us consider the attribute of knowledge. The Mutazilah and the philosophers, in the interest of keeping God's Essence free from change, have denuded it of all attributes. Some theologians (the Asharites) have affirmed the attribute is eternal, nevertheless its relations to different objects of knowledge are different and successive. But is this affirmation of successive relations really necessary? And if the relations are different, can the Attribute itself remain free from change?

God's knowledge, according to Shaikh Ahmad, is an atomic, eternal moment, and with one indivisible act the whole process of time and an entire spatial multiplicity is 'laid bare' (*inkishaf basit*) before God. It is instantaneously related to all the infinite particulars of space and time. In order to illustrate the phenomenon, Shaikh Ahmad cites an example from grammar. Where a man knows what a word (*Kalima*) is, he instantaneously knows all it implies, viz., it can be a noun or a verb or a preposition, it can be triliteral or quadriliteral ; it can be a diptote or a triptote ; it can be present, past or future, etc. If this example is not absolutely perfect, this

APPENDIX "E"

The Creed of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi as given by Fazlur Rahman in his *Selected Letters of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi*, pp. 65-71.

Shaikh Ahmad's Kalam is of far less importance than his brilliant, bold and original doctrine of mysticism which may, with justice, be said to take the place of Kalam—Theology with him. Certainly, as we shall see, his original contribution to Kalam-problems is directly related to and originates in his mystic teaching. In general, the Shaikh exhibits a great distrust of the purely rational activity of the human mind and intellectual disciplines like metaphysical philosophy and mathematics which he lashes with uncompromising scorn. Philosophers earn the titles of 'fool', 'stupid' and 'deprived of God's grace' for their heresies concerning God and His Attributes and for their deterministic view of God and the World. Ibn al-Arabi's teaching which tallies with that of the Philosophers on all these points must also be rejected, although respect ought to be shown to his person since he did not base his findings on pure reason but on mystic experience. This is because the philosophers, by subjectively setting up their own reason as the safe criterion of truth, trifle with God ; but the mystic, even when in error with regard to his findings, tries to find truth in objective experience.

On the subject of God and His Attributes, Shaikh

is because it has been taken from the human sphere. For an Infinite Being what difficulty is there in comprehending the entire multiplicity, as multiplicity, by a simple atomic stroke of knowledge.

God's Knowledge, therefore has a single, unchanging relation to all objects of knowledge ; affirmation of different relationships is neither desirable nor needed. From the point of view of the creatures it is possible to speak of different relationships of the Divine Knowledge with different things. But this is because creatures are finite and in time, and, therefore, their mode of understanding the relationship of the Divine Knowledge with successive and multiple objects can only be the mode of different and successive relationships.

As with His Knowledge, so with God's Speech and Creative Act (*takwin*). His Speech is a single, indivisible eternal Word embracing in its atomic being all the multiplicity and diversity of positive and negative commands, Inspirations and Revelations. The Old and New Testaments and the Quran are not literally the Word ; they are rather manifestations, emanations and effects (*tajalli, tanazzal, ather*) of God's eternal and inexhaustible speech. From the point of view of us humans, again, the Quran must remain the final, consummated Word of God, but from God's point of view it is only the index of His speech.

Equally eternal and indivisible is the Creative Act of God which brings into existence the entire diversity of the universe, even as the Quran says : 'And We commanded but once like the twinkling of an eye' (54 : 50). Thus even the creative command has no diversity of re-

lationship, although again, from our human point of view, every new thing or event must appear to demand a fresh relationship. But really the multiplicity of the world is not the Act of God as such but effects of His eternal Act. Al-Ashari did not understand the matter when he described the creative activity of God as something originated (*hadith*) and thus relegated Creativity from the realm of the eternal Attributes of God to the realm of contingency and change. So also is the case with the dictum of the sufis who pretend to have arrived at a knowledge of God's Act as reflected in the mirror of the acts of the contingents. What they arrive at is not the unfathomable Act of God, but rather the effects and manifestations of it.

What is the relationship between the Act of God and the human action ? The question touches upon a central point of Islamic theology—always delicately and precariously balanced ever since al-Ashari and a point absolutely vital to the moral outlook of Islam. Shaikh Sirhindi's critique of both al-Ashari and the Mutazilah and his positive teaching have a direct relationship with his mystic doctrine, and his utterances on this point are consequently strikingly original.

Shaikh Ahmad first states the essential point in the Sunni Creed on the question, viz., that every voluntary human act must be so construed that it should be attributable morally to man and ontologically to God. The Ahl-al-Sunna say that the voluntary actions of man are in the realm of Divine Power with regard to God's creative agency and in the realm of human power in another way, viz., through attachment (to the act) and

appropriation (of it). Then follows a criticism of al-Ashari. According to his formulation of the solution, the human will has no direct efficacy with regard to the act ; it is God who produces the act entirely—although He does so after man has willed the act and not before it. Although al-Ashari maintains (in opposition to the predestinarians who say that the attribution of the act to man is metaphorical, not real) that the attribution of the act to the human agent is real, nevertheless, his denial of the efficacy of the human will in the producing of the act is really a doctrine of (or qualified) determinism, and that is why it has been justly characterised as 'moderate determinism' (*al-jabr al-mutawassit*).

Then the views of Abu Ishaq al-Isfraini and Abu Bakr al-Baqillani are mentioned. According to the latter, the efficacy of the human will is only with regard to the 'description of the act as distinguished from its production) inasmuch as it is to be described as obedience or disobedience (to God)', i.e., the production is God's, the responsibility is man's (because of his act of will). This Shaikh Ahmad says, is unintelligible, for how can man assume complete responsibility without having produced the act ? According to Abu Ishaq (whom the Shaikh cites with approbation), on the other hand, the human action is the product of the collaboration of two powers, the human and the Divine. This view, viz., that two contributory causes should produce an effect, is quite legitimate. Shaikh Ahmad maintains that although man's will is efficacious in the production of the act, by this causal fact alone, does not become a moral act. For this something else is needed, a moral criterion for judgement.

The judgement is something which 'follows upon' the act and is rooted in the human situation.

The efficacy of the human will is, then, beyond doubt 'even though this be hard upon al-Ashari.' But this has only brought us face to face with the crux of the whole matter. We have said that both man's volitional efficacy and the efficacy of Divine Power and Decree (*qada*) collaborate in the actions of man. But what are the terms of this collaboration and, further, how does man come to assume total responsibility for his voluntary actions ? Shaikh Sirhindi's answer to this question, although brief, seems to me quite new in the history of Muslim ethical thought, and gives for the first time, meaning and content to the orthodox formula. Explaining the meaning of the Decree he says :

'You should know that Ahl al-Sunna believe in the Divine Decree and Determination and say that all good and evil, sweet and bitter is by the Divine Determination (*qadar*) means production and bringing into existence and it is obvious that the producer and originator of everything is God the Glorious—There is no God but He, the Creator of everything. He (alone) be worshipped.'

'Now, the Mutazilah and the Qadrites have rejected the Divine Determination and Decree and have asserted that the acts of men are due entirely to the power of men. They argue that if God ordains evil and then punishes people for it, this would be injustice on His part—Glory be to Him.'

'This is sheer ignorance on their part. For the Divine Decree does not take away the power and choice of man : He has decreed that it shall be up to

man to choose to act or not to act (in a certain way), in brief, God's Decree itself is the cause of human free choice, it has brought about the power of choice in man (*muhaqqiq al-ikhtiyar*) rather than removed it. (The Mutazilite conception of the Divine Decree) is contradicted even by (the freedom of) God's action, for God's actions—in view of His Decree—would either be necessary or impossible . . . and so He Himself will not be free'.

God is not master-player pulling the strings of the human puppets from behind the screen. On the contrary, He has provided for man the world-stage to act freely therein. On this view, God and man are not two actors co-ordinate with one another. The Divine Power is not a co-runner with man on the course of world-history. Rather, it provides the conditions for free human activity ; its collaboration with man is in the sense that it behaves like a matrix, a conditioning, maturing, formative agency for the human will, purpose and endeavour. And since human actions without this matrix will be inconceivable, man is asked to recognize this situation. In this sense God's power is the supreme power, the condition *sine qua non* of man, and all man does may be attributable to it, but to regard God as Man and substituting Himself for the human race is ethically the most dangerous misreading of reality. On this score Shaikh Ahmad again reprimands the philosophers and the Sufis, including, of course, Ibn Al-Arabi, for advocating a relentless determinism and confounding God with man.

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(ERRATA)

Page	Line	Incorrect	Correct
5	28	(3 : 73)	(3 : 7)
8	20	unto	into
28	26	of	or
33	6	include	included
33	20	(500 B.C.)	(600 B.C.)
44	5	a Aleppo	at Aleppo
53	19	Frauz	Franz
56	20	al-Karkhi (d. A.H. 257)	al-Karkhi (d. A.H. 200)
56	27	Sufi (d. A.H. 25)	Sufi (d. A.H. 245)
59	8	essene	essence
68	17	Ramaat	Lama'at
71	8	The Mutazilites	, Mutazilites
77	13	the rejuvenation	and the rejuvenation
92	5	al-Haram	al-Harmayn
99	6	of the heavens	of the sphere of the heavens
99	14	acting	not acting
101	14	over disquisitions	over this teaching and mingled with their own disquisitions
103	26	this Sufism	his Sufism
110	7	that Shaikh	than Shaikh
120	3	(2 : 36)	(2 : 136)
120	23	the Last Day),	the Last Day,
121	30	And has	And he has
123	13	say	says
123	30	from	form
125	19	thee	thou
126	15	Say!	Say:
130	27	we brought	we be brought
131	26	dea	idea
131	27	uman	human

Page	Line	Incorrect	Correct
131	30	Do not	Doth not
132	23	so it is	so is
132	27	world, as	world. As
134	27	a while	awhile
135	11	Prime Mover	the Prime Mover
135	16	prove	proves
149	1	is given	as given
162	29	The God	And God
169	7	balk	black
170	11	a waiting	awaiting
170	17	darkness not	darkness does not
170	30	lip	a lip
172	4	had lack	had any lack
176	5	(1563 A.C.)	(1563 A.D.)
177	4	the Millennium	the second Millennium
179	9	unceivable	inconceivable
179	15	attribute is eternal	attribute of knowledge but in order to keep it immune from change have declared that although the attribute is eternal
182	17	as distinguished	(as distinguished
183	18	Determination.	Determination. For Determina- tion
184	2	, in brief,	. In brief,

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